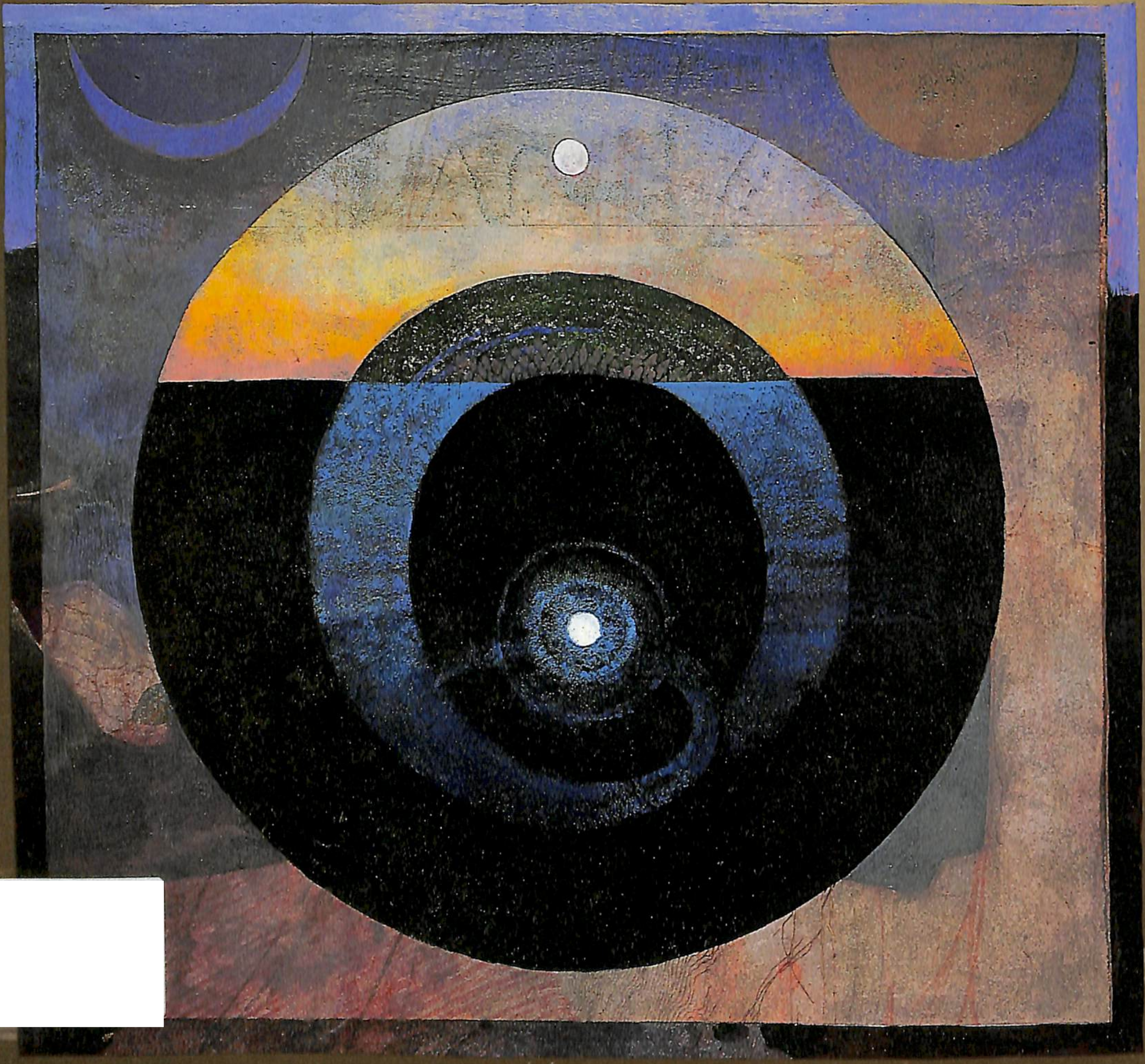
# The Saundaryalaharī of Śankarācārya



A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY ON THE ĀNANDALAHARĪ

BY

Nitya Chaitanya Yati

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THE
# SAUNDARYALAHARĪ
OF
# ŚANKARĀCĀRYA

## A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY
ON THE
## ĀNANDALAHARĪ

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Cover painting by Andrew Larkin © 1992—Illustration to Chapter 2, Verse 28, *Bhagavad Gīta* "Beings have an unmanifested origin and manifested middle states, O Bhārata, and again unmanifested terminations. Where is room for complaint herein?"

*DEDICATED TO NATARAJA GURU*

*WHO INSPIRED US*

*TO SEEK BEAUTY IN THE SAUNDARYALAHARĪ*

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*NITYA CHAITANYA YATI*

*Fernhill Gurukula, Ooty, India*

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# *GUIDE TO SANSKRIT PRONUNCIATION*

The sounds indicated in the examples are approximations of the original Sanskrit sounds. Only the consonants which are significantly different from English pronunciation have been included.

| | VOWELS |
|---|---|
| a | like the u in "but" |
| ā | like the a in "far" |
| i | like the e in "me" |
| ī | like the ee in "beet" |
| u | like the o in "to" |
| ū | like the oo in "pool" |
| ṛ | like the ri in "rig" |
| e | like the a in "gate" |
| ai | like the i in "high" |
| o | like the o in "note" |
| au | like the ou in "loud" |

| | CONSONANTS |
|---|---|
| ṅ | like the ng in "sing" |
| ñ | like the n in Spanish "Señor" |
| c | like the ch in "eschew" |
| ch | like the ch in "much" |
| gh | like the gh in "loghouse" |
| jh | like the geh in "hedgehog" |
| th | like the th in "Othello" |
| dh | like the dh in "adhere" |
| ph | like the ph in "haphazard" |
| bh | like the bh in "abhor" |
| ś | like the sh in "shove" |
| ṣ | like the sh in "fish" |
| ḥ | echoes the vowel which immediately proceeds it |

In the *Saundaryalaharī,* all proper names that are in Sanskrit have been spelled with diacritics but have not been italicized. The exception is the names *Śiva* and *Śakti,* which are not simply names but also refer to absolute principles.

# *FOREWORD*

Within the historical panorama of Bharata, or Greater India, numerous philosophical and religious traditions have flourished and over the centuries many of these strands have intermingled, creating a dense and rich cultural horizon. Emerging from this background is the *Saundaryalaharī*; a Sanskrit poem of one hundred verses, it is a work both vital and enigmatic. The *Saundaryalaharī* is claimed as an essential text by the Tantric Śrīvidyā schools, a heterodox form of Hindu worship centered on the Devī, or goddess. At the same time, it is also considered to be one of the final works of the ninth century philosopher Śankarācārya, staunchest proponent of *advaita vedānta*, or nondual monism. The position that the *Saundaryalaharī* occupies between these two often contradictory traditions highlights essential characteristics of the history of Indian philosophy and of the poem itself.

From the prehistoric Indus Valley culture of Mohenjodaro through its conquest by the Aryans, the incursions of Central Asian nomads, Arab traders, and finally to Mogul conquest and European colonization, Indian cultural development has relied upon recurring revaluations of earlier thought in the light of challenging new interactions. Each era has remolded its philosophical inheritance to its own necessities. When Śankara was wandering throughout India as a mendicant teacher and writing his vast, erudite commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the major factors on the cultural field were:

- a degenerate Hinduism that was both exaggerated and divided;
- the proliferation of heterodox practices under the umbrella of this degeneration;
- a strong challenge to Hinduism by an intellectually spare, reform-minded Buddhism;
- and the expansion of South Indian kingdoms and culture into Southeast Asia, coupled with the cosmopolitan urbanity of the Malabar Coast (home to Śankara) where Christian, Chinese and Indian traditions converged along trade routes.

Upon this multivalent stage, Śankara began his *bhāṣyas*, or commentaries. In these and in his famous debates with Buddhist philosophers, Śankara resurrected and reinvigorated the essential philosophical insights of the early Upaniṣadic *ṛṣis*. The Upaniṣads present an uncompromising vision of unified Beingness which is seamless, without division in time or space, and which sustains all the variegated individualities we relate to in our transactional lives. It is this world view that Śankara restated in a form unembellished by religious dogma.

Numerous Tantric schools flourished at this time and they practiced a spirituality which consciously contradicted all the strictures of a classist, authortarian brahminism. Debate and rebuttal had been Śankara's procedure with a distorted Hinduism and its rival Buddhism. With Tantra the revaluation was more subtle. A deep veneration for the primal energy of manifestation, *śakti*, often personified as the goddess or Devī, is the potent nucleus of Tantra that Śankara extricated from its ritualistic encrustations. In his two final works, the *Saundaryalaharī* and the *Śivānandalaharī*, Śankara used Tantra's intense and intimate identification with feminine nature to sculpt his poetic presentation of essential Upaniṣadic truth. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, he draws on the deepest of Indian traditions, its Dravidian contemplative culture (often thought to be the prehistoric source of Tantric practice), to restate in a refined manner the same spare insights of his *advaita* commentaries. By drawing in and sublimating the devotional and heterodox currents of his time, Śankara enriches the strict purity of his philosophy.

The *Saundaryalaharī* is divided into two, sometimes three, distinct sections. The first forty-one verses are the *Ānandalaharī*, often separately published, as is done here, and considered the most important section of the book. The second section consists of verses forty-two through one hundred; verses ninety-two through one hundred are sometimes grouped as a third section. Together these sections comprise the *Saundaryalaharī*. *Laharī* translates as intoxication or "an overwhelming subjective or objective experience of an item of intelligence or of beauty upsurging in the mind of man" (Nataraja Guru). That factor of intoxication or flooding of consciousness is present throughout all sections of the book. In the first forty-one verses, *ānanda* is used in the sense of delight or bliss and refers to that experience of value which is subjectively appreciated. *Saundarya* refers to beauty, to an aesthtic value appreciation which is objective. Taken together, *ānanda* (delight) and *saundarya* (beauty) constitute an overwhelming, intoxicating experience which is both subjective and objective, inward and outward, one that permeates consciousness and allows a person to participate in the continuous pulsation of the neutral Absolute into a magnetic, compelling manifestation of Beauty.

In the last 1200 years, there have been innumerable publications of the *Saundarylaharī* in India, some with commentaries, some with accompaning paintings of the goddess, many with a variety of *mantras* or *yantras* for each of the verses. It has continued to be used as a devotional text, its verses chanted and meditated upon. However, until 1958 when the Harvard Oriental Series edition by Professor Norman Brown was published, there had been only two publications of the *Saundaryalaharī* in any European language. Brown's translation and comments are well grounded in an honest, thoughtful appreciation of the work. They falter, however, on his too cautious, academic literalism, and very little of the *Saundaryalaharī's* poetic or mystical tenor is allowed to come forth.

In 1988 an English translation and commentary by Nataraja Guru was published by East-West University in India. Nataraja Guru brought to bear on his study of the *Saundaryalaharī* a philosophical vision steeped in the multiple crosscurrents that were formed by the intersection of Indian tradition and the disciplines of modern Western science. The son of a prominent social reformer of South India, Nataraja Guru received his first degrees in zoology and geology. He went on to a D.Litt. in educational philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, later teaching at a Quaker school in Geneva, Switzerland. This varied background nurtured in him an ability to analyze beneath surface appearance to structural foundations and to look for interdisciplinary coherence.

Controversy has long surrounded the authorship of the *Saundaryalaharī* with many scholars feeling that it is wrongly attributed to Śankara. Nataraja Guru, however, saw it as another expression, in different form and language, of Śankara's nondual vision. Śankara's earlier *bhāṣyas* were written in what Nataraja Guru calls meta-language, which is a language about language, and which utilizes abstract signs. It is algebraic, highly rational and conceptual, and is a language that discusses structure and assigns relationship. According to Nataraja Guru, the *Saundaryalaharī* was written in proto-language, that earliest and persisting sub-stratum of communication that relies on image and visual reverberation rather than on intellectual discourse. Proto-language, geometric in orientation, is that archaic seedbed which is home to poetry, music, and the variety of symbolic art forms. In meta-language we are speaking rationally about a conceptual formation. In proto-language we experience an image in the immediate present and through many levels of perception. Nataraja Guru understood that Śankara was using the prehistoric but potent symbols of Tantra and Devī worship to present *advaita vedānta* non-verbally. It is when words are used as allusive images that resonant in our universal consciousness and awaken in us sympathetic states of being and understanding that a written work can be non-verbal. In Nataraja Guru's study of the *Saundaryalaharī* he emphasized the nature of the different languages used by Śankara and the position of proto-language in revealing the nature of Absolute Reality to man.

Nataraja Guru's student and successor is the present commentator on the *Ānandalaharī*, Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati. Guru Nitya was raised in a traditional matriarchal compound in South India and comes from a family of scholars and poets. His studies in philosophy were conducted along two complementary tracks, as a university student in Kerala and Madras and as a mendicant throughout all of India. As a wandering student he lived with the Dutch scholar of comparative religions, Dr. Mees, the mystic Ramana Maharshi, and at the camp of Mahatma Gandhi. Supplementing Guru Nitya's work in philosophy were graduate studies in psychology at the University of Bombay. After his period of studies, Guru Nitya spent eighteen months in solitary retrreat, delving deeply into his own physical and spiritual nature. The rigors of this isolation lay a foundation of contemplative discipline and mystic intuition that add a significant dimension to his work on the *Saundaryalaharī*.

To this commentary, Guru Nitya brings a strong background in the schools of Indian philosophy, a comprehensive psychological knowledge, and an acute insight into the nature of aesthetics. The *Saundaryalaharī's* often arcane symbols are clarified by his understanding of the book's inner structure and its mythological references. Verse seventeen is an appropriate example. At first reading it seems to be merely an intricate listing, somewhat devotional, of various goddesses. Guru Nitya, however, illuminates the basic psychological states that the goddesses are indicating and the characteristics and relationships of speech that they represent.

It is significant that Śankara wrote the *Saundaryalaharī* as a poem to be sung in praise of the divine *Śakti*. When chanted, words move beyond their solely rational import and they become carriers of Beauty. In this way, language passes beyond syntax. *Nāda* or sound is, in fact, one of the central concepts of the *Saundaryalaharī*. As *avyakta* (the unmanifest) unfolds outward and becomes modulated, its first tremor is that of sound. The reality of the One is made tangible to us as sound, and sound is the basis of manifested consciousness. The meaning of the neutral Absolute bursts as a value into our awareness, a process called *sphoṭa* in Sanskrit. As such, sound has a transforming effect and in the *Saundaryalaharī* many verses concentrate on its nature and function.

Each verse, as well, has its own particular *mantra* or sound syllable which when concentrated upon in a proper state of attention helps to align the meditator's consciousness, to direct it to an awareness of unlimited Being. Guru Nitya has stripped away the popular misconceptions surrounding these sound units and presents them as intended, as aural tools for focusing one's consciousness. In the great proliferation of *śakti*, the *līla* of creation, we first hear; then we see the world's shimmering beauty. What was vast, indiscernable and beyond comprehension–the mystery of all beginnings–now becomes sound and sight interweaving into innumerable configurations. Along with each *mantra*, there are corresponding *yantras* or geometric forms whose visual patterns also work to discipline the individual's consciousness. Guru Nitya clarifies the relationships between *mantra*, *yantra* and their activating dynamics, *tantra*, and highlights their essential nature as methods of transformation.

Implicit in a discussion of Tantra is an understanding of yoga, which is the dialectical pairing of polarities in such a manner that they can, through practice and concentration, be united into a meaningful whole. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, there are two essential and recurring polarites: *Śiva* and *Śakti*, the masculine ground of being from which feminine becoming arises and to which she gives power and meaning; the goddess and the devotee, where the goddess is that great universal circumference which the devotee relates to as an individual point and into which he eventually merges.

The splendid and alluring *Śakti* emerges from the mute, ash-covered *Śiva*. As the dancing goddess, *Śakti* rains down art, music, mystical vision and, in fact, the essence of our very life upon us. This poetic allegory is descriptive of both cosmic functions and psychological processes. In the imagery of the goddess which Śankara employs, her body is used in the manner of traditional Indian aesthetics: as a canvas upon which to paint spiritual insights. It is through the palpability of her body that the devotee begins to apprehend what is non-manifested. And it is through her beauty–its sound, sight, touch and smell–that the source of all creation is seen and eventually merged with.

As Guru Nitya writes in *Love and Devotion*: "The archtypal mother image in the *Saundaryalaharī* is used as an edifice on which to sculpt the intricacies of man-woman dialectics, the virtues and paradoxes of the female psyche, and the semantic possibilities and even impossibilites that highlight shades of bliss ranging from simple sensuality to the all-consuming conflagration of Beauty that is interchangeable with terms like Love, Total Awareness, Wonder and Absolute Transcendence."

The particular iconographies of the goddess in the *Saundaryalaharī* are intended to be used as supports for meditation, as a way to approach the one unmanifested Reality. When the devotee finally realizes that he is That, that the cosmic and psychological aspects are but conjoined counterparts, the iconographic tools disappear, as does the individual. This understanding of Tantric practice has often been a stumbling block when students become enamoured of the images that are there only as a pathway.

Erotics is an inescapable topic in a work related to Tantra, and Tantra has often been perceived as a yoga of sex, where sexual intercourse is the ultimate method for realizing reality and power. This is too narrow an understanding of the erotics which suffuse the *Saundaryalaharī*. In the *Saundaryalaharī* the erotic pull is that of the god Eros. It is an erotic mysticism, spoken of by both Plotinus and St. Augustine in the Western tradition, and which is the attraction of the individual toward God or the Good. The act of sex is the final, extroverted manifestation of eros in the physical realm, one way of actualizing the erotic sensation but not its source. In both the Christian Catholic Church and in Hindu *Vaishnavism*, the individual aspirant, whether male or female, is likened to the lover of God, either as the bride of Christ or as Radha to Kṛṣṇa's cowherd. Sensual imagery and male-female attractions are forms used to describe the relationship between the individual person and the all-encompassing divine reality. Similar literary and philosophical methods can be seen in St. John of the Cross' *Dark Night of the Soul* and Jayadeva's *Gīta Govindam*. This relationship can be put in a more secular language: conscient and articulating spirit is in constant dialectical interplay with taming and transforming matter, as is beautifully elaborated by Sri Aurobindu in his poem *Savitri*. This is not to say there is no sex in erotics, but we need to rephrase our language and understanding: sex is not the ultimate union but is rather the functional dynamics of the word of God.

In India at the end of the dry season, the whole landscape is parched. The cracked earth and the shriveled plants long for water. Slowly in the darkening east the monsoon clouds gather. As they coalesce, a charge fills the air and everything is electrified. At the moment of nearly insupportable suspense, the rains break free and wash over the world. This intense polarization, waiting and yearning, culmination, release and fulfillment are the erotic passions that pulse through the *Saundaryalaharī*. It is the song of desire and union between the Devī and her silent husband, *Śiva*, and one that finds resonance within our own hearts as the waves of beauty billow up from their dance.

*Deborah Buchanan • Portland, Oregon • 1994*

# *INTRODUCTION*

According to the traditional psychology of Vedānta, the Absolute is conceived both as the transcendental *parā* and the immanent *aparā*. In a slightly modified sense, Tantra calls these *Śiva* and *Śakti*, respectively. There are mythological stories describing *Śiva* as the destroyer of the three cities, *tripurāntaka*, a city or *pura* being a multi-structured matrix of human interest. These three cities of man's interests are the worlds of the cosmos, of ethos or social culture, and of the psyche.

Man is interested in the cosmic phenomena to which his place of habitation, the green earth, belongs. In the city of the cosmos he has the starry heavens that conceal within themselves system upon system, from the nebular to the biological. Within the system of his own solar orbit, man relates the events of his life to the rotations of the planets, the waxing and waning of the moon, the equinoxes of the sun, the change of the seasons, the storms and fury of the sea, and the cyclones and earthquakes which expose him to the caprice of fateful chance. Man's city of the cosmos ranges from the glistening dew drops on the rose in his garden to the infinite that stretches far beyond the farthest star which has not yet kissed the earth with its beams of light. This city is full of awe, enormous and sublime. By its quantitative or qualitative might, this cosmos shocks man and fills him with pain at his own smallness, then fills him with a feeling of exaltation at the greatness of his own moral nature, which is "loftier than all the splendors of the outer world" (Immanuel Kant).

The second city of man is the "moral world below" which is festooned with smiles and tears. It is here man lives with his fellow men and women in love and hatred, where he marries and begets children, and husbands land and rears cattle. It is here that he trades with all that can be purchased and sold, including war and peace and morality and justice. Sociology and commerce, economics and politics are the pastimes of this city. Here man erects schools and legislative houses, jails and concentration camps, temples of god

Surface of the Sun. *Andrew Larkin. Acrylic painting on monoprint. America. 1990.*

*The sun, as an integral part of the cosmic phenomena, represents one of the three cities or* tripurās *that are sustained and nourished by* Śakti. *Rising up from the surface of the sun, the solar flare resembles the spark of individual consciousness that becomes "an all-devouring conflagration which ultimately burns away time and space and all the phenomenal names and forms that give content and structure to the three cities."*

and art emporiums. He revels here in his operas and theaters. From this city man shoots his missiles to the distant planets. He performs impossible feats in medicine and surgery to save rare human life, and then with the same ease of conscience plugs in the wires of electric chairs to wipe out those whom he fears. Man lives in this second city called *saṃsāra* weaving tales of fret and fume signifying nothing and seeing visions of beauty, truth and goodness.

Man's third city lies in the crevice of his brain and in the cave of his heart. It is the realm of his psyche. The face of this city is man's surface consciousness that changes its hues from the pink rose of morning's glory to the terrifying dark of dreadful nights. It is in this world that man becomes erotic or sarcastic, compassionate or destructive, heroic or frightful. Mysteries and marvels of the unknown fill this city with wonder or fear that ever remain a secret to man. It is in this innermost city that man listens to the call of the Absolute and longs for liberation. It is just here that he receives the all-consuming light of the third eye of *Śiva*, the burner of the three cities, the *tripurāntaka*.

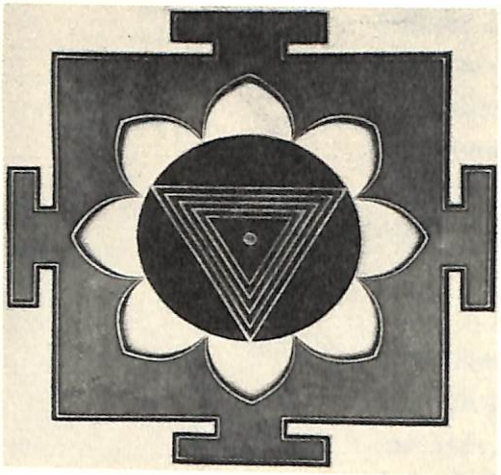
*Śiva* sets ablaze the spark of individual consciousness into an all-devouring conflagration, which ultimately burns away Time and Space and all the phenomenal names and forms that give content and structure to the three cities of the cosmos (*brahmāṇḍa*), politikos (*saṃsāra*), and psychos (*ahaṃkāra*). The counterpart of *tripurāntaka* is *tripurasundari*, the beauty that bathes the abovesaid three cities of man with her eternal glory and veiling *māyā*. In all the three cities, the city of the heavenly galaxy and nature, the city of interpersonal relationships, and the city of the libido and subliminal psychic underworld, man stands spellbound by the beauty of *tripurasundari*. He is enlightened by the truth of her wisdom. He is inspired by her never-failing law, her ingenious sense of structure, and her unsurpassed goodness. In the eastern skies of the unchanging *Śiva*, *tripurasundari* paints in gold and purple the dawn of creation. In his midday skies she sets the clock of action, *karmacakra*, which keeps the wheel of *saṃsāra* whirling into cyclic rhythms. In his evening skies she paints the dissolution of all that vanishes behind the crimson veil of the dying sun.

## *VERSE ONE*

*śivaḥśaktyā yukto yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavitum*
*na ced evam devo na khalu kuśalaḥ spanditum api*
*atastvām ārādhyām hari hara viriñcyādibirapi*
*praṇantum stōtum vā katham akṛta puṇyaḥ prabhavati*

If *Śiva* should only when united with *Śakti*
get the power to manifest in becoming;
If, again, without such, he has no ability even to pulsate;
How then could one of unaccomplished merits
have the privilege of bowing to or even praising
One such as you, adored by Hari, Hara, Viriñci and others?

The Indian trinity is an allegorical personification of creation, preservation, and dissolution. These functions are also understood as the projection of manifestion, empirical existence and final merger, and are called, respectively, in Indian mythology Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. In the present verse, Brahmā is named as Viriñci, Viṣṇu as Hari, and Maheśvara as Hara. As these triple aspects are within cyclic periods, the three gods have a time span and are not to be confused with the Absolute, or *Śiva*.



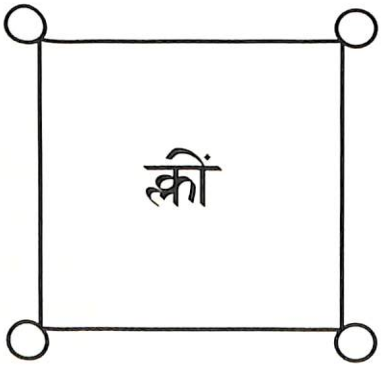
Kālī Yantra. *Gouache on paper. Rājasthān, India. 18th century.*

*Located within the four-fold structure of consciousness is the lotus with open petals. It surrounds the five downward-pointing triangles symbolic of the female* yoni. *At the very center is the* bindu, *or locus of universal consciousness.*

Each verse in the *Saundaryalaharī* has a corresponding *mantra* and a corresponding *yantra*. The *mantra* is the nominal, verbal, acoustic aspect of *nāda*, the primordial sound considered to be the original cause of the universe. The *yantra* is the formal, visual symbol that delimits the potential of the *mantra* to manifest in a chosen field. There is, in addition, a special device that relates the *mantra* to the *yantra* so as to derive the psychodynamics implied in both. *Mantra* is considered the algebraic aspect and *yantra* the geometric one, while *tantra* is the activating dynamics that conjoins *mantra* and *yantra* to make a functional whole.

Each original Sanskrit verse has both an exoteric and an esoteric meaning. The exoteric meaning is the translation. The esoteric meaning is that which indicates the *mantras* that are implied in the verse. Each *yantra* has its own psychodynamics which operate in a subtle way when the aspirant looks steadily at the form. As the conceptual ground of the universe is established on the audiovisual experience of the subject, all forms have their own potential to influence one's state of consciousness. The particular psychodynamics of the *yantra* are called *yantracaitanya* and the psychodynamics of the *mantra* are *mantracaitanya*. *Caitanya*, or pure consciousness, is the common homogenous factor implied in the universal Self and in the individual self, as well as in visual and auditory aspects. The original expounder of a *mantra*, along with its corresponding *yantra*, is called its *ṛṣi* or seer.

The yantra for this first verse is as shown.



*klīṃ*

The seed *mantra* or *bījamantra* is *klīṃ*. That is to be meditated upon as the conjunction of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. The *ṛṣi* of the *mantra* that is recommended for meditative propitiation is Govinda, and the presiding deity to be duly worshipped and invoked for grace is *mahātripurasundari*. The meter for recitation is the octave, *anuṣṭup*, and the psychodynamics to be experienced are that of being surrounded by an ocean of nectar. The spiritual growth to be experienced is the perception of *Śiva* and *Śakti* as aspects of truth that are visualized, as aspects of goodness that are perceived, and as aspects of an ecstatic appreciation of beauty in which everything stands bathed.

In the *Saundarayalaharī* the conjunction of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is understood as a structure of twenty-five categories listed below.

Head of Elephanta. *Maheśvara, on south wall of* Śiva *cave. Elephanta, India. Possibly Kalacuri period. Ca. mid-sixth century.*

*These three stone heads depict the triple aspects of* Śiva. *On the left is the fearful manifestation of destruction, balanced by the right-hand carving of creation which is serene and feminine. Subsuming both is Mahādeva, the great god, who contains all moods and powers within himself.*

### The Five Elements

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Earth | Water | Fire | Air | Ether |
| *pṛthvī* | *ap* | *agni* | *vāyu* | *ākāśa* |

### The Five Senses

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Smell | Taste | Sight | Touch | Sound |
| *gandham* | *rasam* | *rūpam* | *sparśam* | *śabdam* |

### The Five Organs of Sense

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nose | Tongue | Eye | Skin | Ear |
| *ghrāṇam* | *jihva* | *cakṣu* | *tvak* | *śrotram* |

### The Five Agents of Action

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Genitals | Excretory | Legs | Hands | Speech |
| *upastham* | *pāyu* | *pādam* | *pāṇi* | *vāk* |

### The Five Forms of Śiva

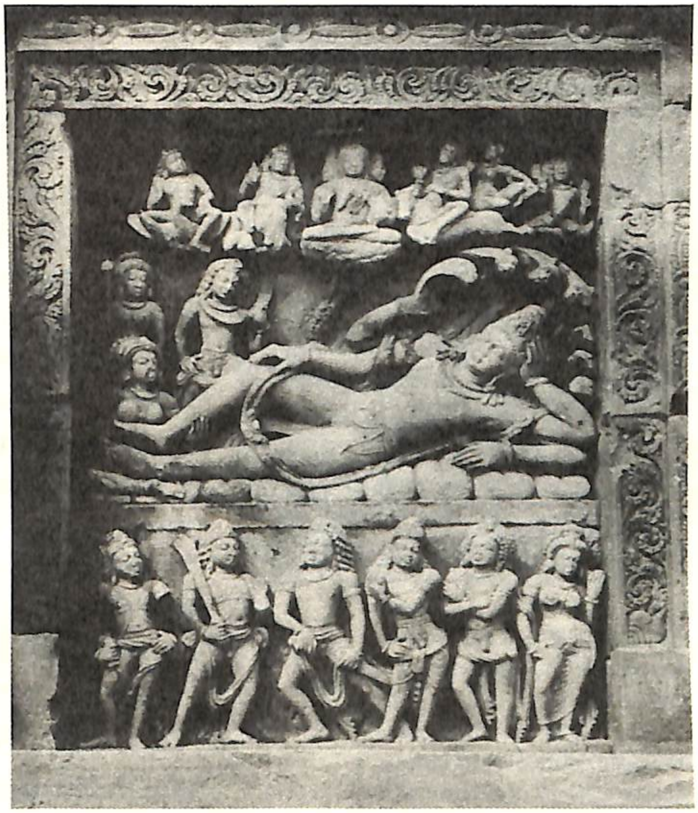
| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mind | Illusion | Knowledge | Absolute Lord | Pure Absolute |
| *manas* | *māyā* | *śudhavidyā* | *maheśvara* | *sadāśiva* |

## *VERSE TWO*

*tanīyāmsam pāmsum tava caraṇa paṅkeruha bhavam*
*viriñciḥ sañcinvan viracayati lokān avikalam*
*vahaty enam śauriḥ katham api sahasreṇa śirasām*
*haraḥ samkṣudyainam bhajati bhasitōddhūlanavidhim*

Brahmā the creator collects the fine dust
of the lotus of your feet,
and out of that creates all these worlds.
Viṣṇu with the thousand heads (of *ananta*) somehow
preserves all those individual things from chaotic mixing;
and Hara (*Śiva*), powdering the dust even more finely,
adorns it on himself freely as he meditates.

In Indian religious rituals and forms of devotional homage, the initial step is to offer worship to the feet of the diety. Similarly, when a disciple meets his guru, he prostrates at the guru's feet, as the feet symbolize the spiritual path. A guru walks in the path of the Absolute, *brahman*, and since walking in Sanskrit is called *carya*, walking in the path of the Absolute is termed *brahmacarya*. A guru is a *brahmacāri*. By prostrating or showing devotion to the feet, one esoterically accepts the path of the guru. In the present case, the feet of



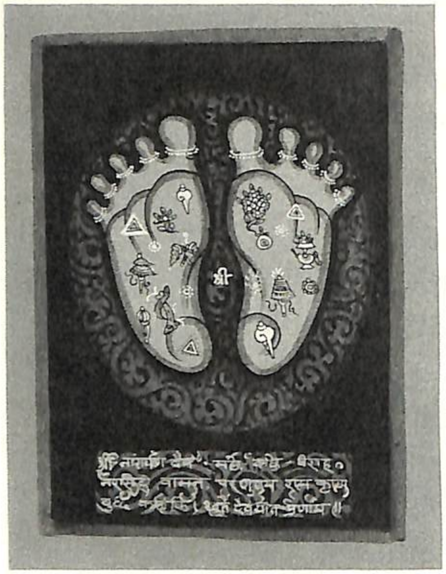
Viṣṇu Sleeps on the Cosmic Serpent. *Dashavatara Temple. Deogarh, India. Sixth century.*

*Viṣṇu is the god who sustains all of creation in its actuality and specificity. Here, as Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa (having all forms), he reclines on* ananta, *the serpent of endless time, while floating on the primeval waters.*

the Universal Mother are worshipped as the source of the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. These triple functions of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are symbolized in the particular *yantra* that is recommended for meditation with this verse. It is given as a triangle with the base inverted. Its ascending left side is Brahmā, the base is Viṣṇu, and the ascending right side is Rudra.

The seed *mantra* is given as *hrīṃ*. The main intention of the Tantric meditation using this *yantra* is to sublimate the demands of one's lower nature. All the phenomena of the entire universe are here meditated upon as the fine dust particles on the feet of the Universal Mother. The feet are pictured in the form of a lotus, and the dust is referred to as the pollen dust of the lotus feet. Pollen is a symbol of fertility or generation and its abundance symbolizes fecundity. The worlds of the universe being infinite, they are referred to as the countless dust particles of the feet. This meditation implies the movement of the mind from the infinite cosmos to the most minutely conceivable point. By applying the processes of reduction and enlargement, the specific properties cited in the phenomenal world are revealed to be appearance rather than reality.

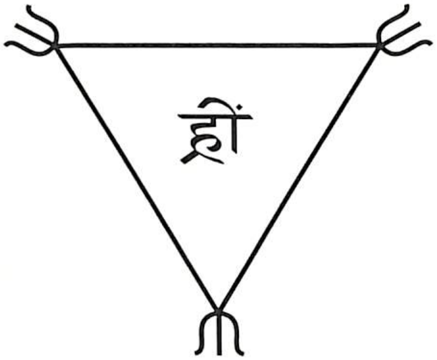
Even though the cause can be infinitesimally small, the effect assumes an empirical status in time and space. There it deserves the validity of the actual. Hence, all actions are directed towards rendering objects their actual existence and giving attention to the preservation of that status. It is emphasized here that Viṣṇu is preserving these worlds by supporting them, somehow, on his thousand heads with great difficulty. Phenomenal specificity is not the true nature of the Absolute and, therefore, it is unnatural for phenomena to remain changeless. Change is not only inevitable but it also culminates absolute reduction into a mode of total negation. That is why it is stated here that the universes are gathered and reduced to a state of dust still finer than the original caused by Rudra, the god of dissolution, to decorate his forehead. The pollen of frequent generation taken from the feet of the Universal Mother finally changes into the irreversible state of the changeless on the forehead of *Śiva* or the Absolute.



The footprints of Nārāyaṇa. *Gouache on paper. Nepal. Twentieth century.*

*The footprints of the gods and goddesses are microcosmic representations of that particular deity's attributes. They delineate in visual form the divine qualities that the deity possesses. In Indian mythology it is said that the goddess' footprints leave a pervasive fragrance on the earth, arousing both devotion and discrimination in her devotees.*

By this meditation the twenty-five categories enumerated in the commentary on the first verse are properly reviewed and reassessed. By such a discipline, all sensual, vital, mental and psychic distractions can be removed. To ensure the success of this meditation the middle *mantra* of the preliminary invocation of the Universal Mother is used. By preliminary invocation we mean here the *bālā* aspect, *bālā* translating as small female child. The Universal Mother is first invoked as a small child using a special *mantra, aiṃ hrīṃ sauṃ.* After having properly received the *mantra* from the guru, one should use the yantra with *hrīṃ* as the seed *mantra*. This should be practiced until it becomes easy for the aspirant to efface the individual ego and to reduce everything to a state of consciousness which has no dimension of time or space. Simultaneously the aspirant's awareness of his identity with the pure consciousness of the universal Self that pervades everything increases and deepens.



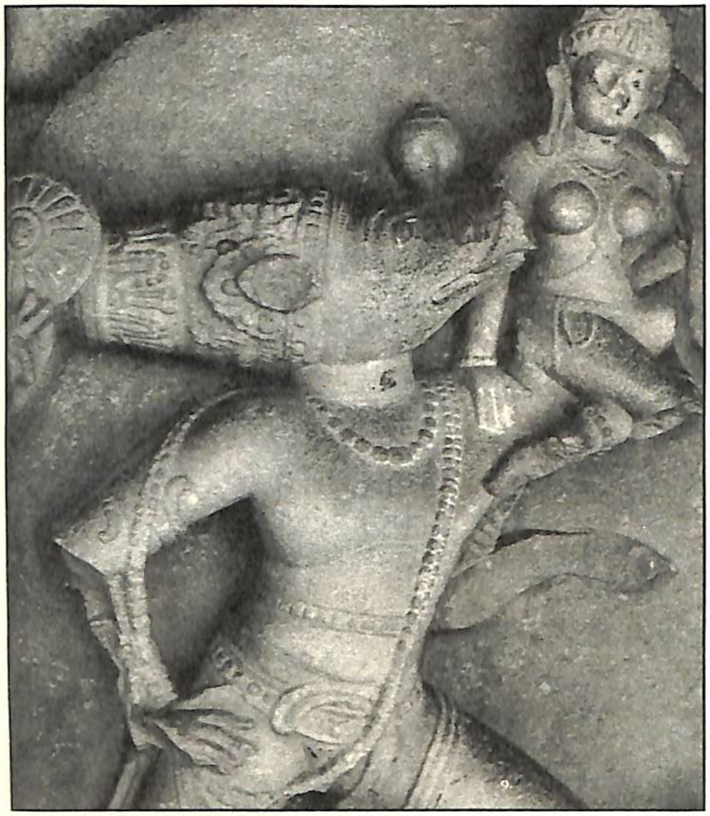
*hrīṃ*

## *VERSE THREE*

*avidyānām antastimira mihiradvīpanagarī*
*jaḍānām caitanya stabaka makarandaśrutijharī*
*daridrāṇām cintāmaṇi guṇanikā janmajaladhau*
*nimagnānām daṁṣṭrā muraripuvarāhasya bhavatī*

O Mother, the dust of your feet appears to the ignorant
as a luminous island in the ocean of darkness and dispels
their ignorance. The same is experienced by people of inertia
as a flow of the nectar of the divine flower of consciousness.
To poor people the dust of your feet is a collection of
wish-fulfilling gems. Those who lie immersed in the ocean
of *samsāra* (or becoming) see the same as the tusk of the divine
boar that once raised the world from the abyss
of destruction as the incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu.

In the *Bhagavad Gīta* (chapter seven, verse sixteen) Kṛṣṇa speaks of four types of people who turn to him with devotion: "Among doers of the good, four kinds are intent on me, Arjuna: the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of the goods of life, and the wise, O Leader of the Bharatas." We find in the *Saundaryalaharī* the classification of another four-item group, here seeking refuge at the feet of the Devī, which is very similar to that given by Kṛṣṇa. This world of birth and death and proliferating chains of action, *karma*,

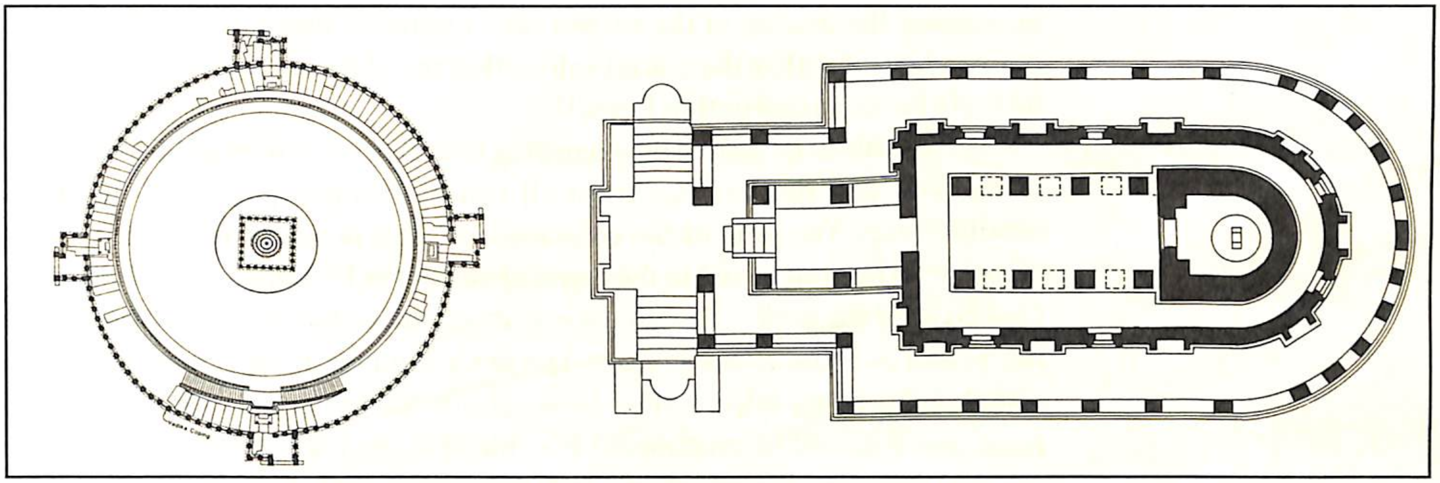


Viṣṇu in his incarnation as a boar, Varāha, rescuing the goddess Pṛthvī, or earth. *Durgā Temple, Aihoḷe. India. Ca. late seventh century to early eighth century.*

*Viṣṇu, the god of sustenance, incarnated ten different times, each time as the savior of humankind during a crisis. Complex imagery here portrays the principle of enlightenment as Viṣṇu who rescues what is precious in life from the chaos of violence and ignorance.*

is bristling with dualities of all sorts and is called *samsāra* or *bhavābdhi*, the ocean of becoming. This phenomenal superimposition on the pure Self, which is One without a second, is attributed to ignorance or nescience, *avidyā*. In Vedānta, specific possibility of error in the individual mind is called *avidyā* and generic distortion of the universal mind or the mind of God, *īśvara*, is called *māyā*. As the primal cause of suffering is personal ignorance, the first reference is made to ignorant people, *avidyānām*. The individual self is usually compared to the waves that form on the surface of the sea, having no substantial existence apart from the water of the sea. Hence, the inner and outer environment of the individual self is here compared to a sea of darkness. The grace of the Mother is visualized as a rising sun on an island of light. In Sanskrit, the dispeller of darkness is called guru, and here the goddess herself is looked upon as the true guru who resides in the very heart of the seeker. The *mantra* is the sound body of the deity who reveals the true Self to the seeker; that is why the deity herself is looked upon as the guru.

The second reference is to people of dull intellect. The Sanskrit word is *jaḍa*, which is the opposite of *caitanya*. Whereas *caitanya* is formless and can assume any modulation, what is most characteristic of *jaḍa* is its morbidity. Assuming a modality is *vṛtti*. In modern psychological terms it is the same as a conditioned state. If a man's mind is already cluttered with the morbid conditionings of his childhood impressions and narrow social conventions, *jaḍa*, the mind becomes so closed as to have no spiritual vision of the Absolute. In such cases, a breakthrough is necessary. The evolution of life is a continuous process of organizing matter to a more and more complex expression of values, which can be easily described as good and beautiful and, in that sense, identical with the spirit. Devotees who crave for a breakthrough to such realization and understanding become more and more conscious of the fetters of life. Such a person bemoans his incapacity and helplessness to see truth and wants the divine to bestow upon him the grace that can stimulate and inspire his intelligence. The well-known *gāyatrī mantra* of the *Bṛhdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is a prayer to this effect, asking the light of the divine to remove the darkness of



*Left:* Floor plan of Stūpa I or the Great Stūpa. *Sāñcī, Madhya Pradesh. India. Ca. third century B.C. through the first century A.D*

*Right:* Floor plan of Pārvatī Temple, 1884. *Madhya Pradesh. India. Ca. early sixth century.*

*In India both Hindu temples and Buddhist* stūpas *have been built with their architectural framework based upon the geometric designs that are also found in Tantric* yantras, *such as those used in the* Saundaryalaharī. *The temple or* stūpa *was an architectural representation of the structure of the cosmos. Their design also expresses the complex insights of traditional psychology, such as the various walls relating to the five elements and their corresponding human emotions.*

the mind and to stimulate the intellect. Narayana Guru describes such a breakthrough in his *Ātmōpadeśa Śatakam* (verse thirty-five):

> "Like ten thousand suns coming all at once,
> the modulation of discrimination arises;
> the veil of transcience, covering knowledge, is *māyā*;
> tearing this away, the primal sun alone shines."

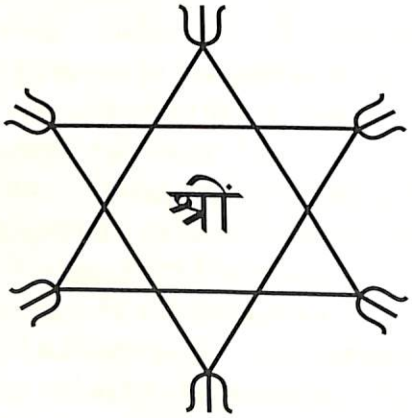
This same grace is referred to as the flow of honey of the divine flower of consciousness, *caitanya stabaka makarandaśrutijharī.*

The poor people mentioned here are the same as the seeker of the goods of life, *arthārthi*, of the *Bhagavad Gīta*. Though in a mundane sense this can mean ordinary seekers of wealth, spiritually it has a more significant reference. Even the man who indulges in opulence and the luxury of an affluent life can suddenly feel wretched and worthless when the idea occurs to him that the things in which he indulges have no spiritual worth. The turning away of a person like Mary Magdalene from the pleasures and riches of life to Jesus Christ is an example of the awareness of spiritual poverty. The fulfillment of such a turnabout search is attributed in this verse to the grace coming from *cintāmaṇi*. *Cintā* in Sanskrit refers to the mind that worries regretfully over the past and is desirefully anxious of the future. *Maṇi* is a precious jewel. In the present case it should be understood as the grace of the divine that cures one of all regrets and remorses of the past and as that which fulfills all future desires.

Another sense in which *cintāmaṇi* can be understood is as the value core of one's own self. A person becomes desirous of an external object only when he sees the value that that object represents as an outside factor. When he overcomes the duality of the subject-object paradox through proper contemplation, he will realize there is no value other than his own Self. In otherwords, he finds his *cintāmaṇi* within himself.

The ultimate goal of life according to Indian scriptures is the realization of the Self and deliverance from all sense of bondage and all forms of conditionings. The state of the consciousness that is bound is stated here as, "those who live immersed in the ocean of *samsāra* or becoming." In all religions God is called the savior. The divine is as much interested in the salvation of the individual as is the seeker himself. The grace is therefore described here as an actual saving factor which comes from beneath the feet of the seeker. The grace from above should be understood in contrast to the grace from beneath. Here the reference is to the actual events of everyday life that turn the footsteps of the seeker to the path which will ultimately lead him or her to salvation. That is why it is likened to the tusk of Viṣṇu incarnated as a boar.

The *yantra* given here for meditation is a simplified form of the *śrīcakra* in which isosceles triangles interpose. The *bījamantra* is *śrīṃ*.



*śrīṃ*

# *VERSE FOUR*

*tvadanyaḥ pāṇibhyām abhaya varado daivata-gaṇaḥ*
*tvamekā naivāsi prakaṭitavarābhītyabhinayā*
*bhayāt-trātum dātum phalamapi ca vāñchāsamadhikam*
*śaraṇye! lokānām tava hi caraṇāveva nipuṇau.*

O Mother, thou art the refuge of all the worlds.
When other gods give their blessings to devotees
with gestures symbolizing boons as well as refuge,
You do not show any such gestures.
Your mere feet are more than sufficient to bestow
upon your devotees all their needs,
which are more than what they themselves are aware of.

In their iconographic representations, Viṣṇu, *Śiva*, and most of the other gods are shown with a raised right hand symbolizing blessings and an open left hand symbolizing refuge. It is not usual to show the Devī with these gestures, as the Devī is not to be understood as a kind of tutelary deity to whom the worshipper goes in times of need to ask for favors. She is the generator of life, its preserver, and the transformer of life who brings each individual self to his highest perfection, and her feet are to be understood as an ontological negative factor. She is like the hidden roots of a tree which continuously supply nourishing sap to the branches and leaves, though their presence is never felt.

In the traditional accounts of the Devī, the four symbols shown in her hands are the *pāśa* (a rope), *aṅkuśa* (a hook), *ikṣukodaṇḍa* (bow and arrow), and *puṣpabāṇa* (arrows of flowers which are usually five in number). The five flowers are *kalahāra* (earth symbol), *kamala* (water symbol), *raktakairava* (fire symbol), *indīvara* (air symbol) and *sahakāra* (sky symbol). Devī by herself does not shoot them, but by her consent and will the god of love shoots these flower arrows to stimulate love in the heart of the devotee. An arrow is always aimed at a mark or target which symbolizes singleness of purpose, concentration, and the withdrawal of interest from all else. In the present case, instead of one arrow five arrows have to mark the same target.

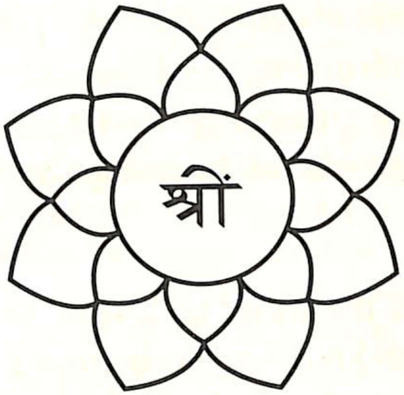
Śiva and Śakti. *Bronze statue, Cōḷa style. India. Twentieth century.*

Śiva *and* Śakti *represent the two inseparable aspects of existence, variously defined as male/female, active/passive, form/formless. In Indian iconography these two facets of the one numinous absolute reality are given artistic form as the husband and wife pair* Śiva *and* Śakti. *Each of the deities' four hands is either in a* mudrā, *cosmic hand posture, which expresses an aspect of the god or goddess, or the hand holds an object which describes an attribute of that deity.*

A man's life is all in chaos and conflict when his physical body is not tuned with its vital urges, when his vital urges don't have the sanction of his rational connection, when his intuitions point in a different direction than his logic, and when he has psychic apprehensions which do not tally with his spiritual values. In the grace that is promised here, the devotee obtains the harmony of all these five aspects through love or pure devotion.

*Dharma, artha, kāma,* and *mokṣa* are the four goals of life. *Dharma* is a discipline one receives at the feet of a guru and from which one obtains a clear notion of his or her own intrinsic nature and an idea of the righteous way in which he or she can relate to the rest of the world. *Artha* is the means and instruments by which one can ensure one's happiness. *Kāma* is the natural and rightful desires which everyone should have as a dynamic to make life meaningful. *Mokṣa* is deliverance from the chains of *karma* and a total effacement of all colorations and conditionings caused by the impressions of the past, *vāsanā.* As Devī causes the phenomenal world as well as release from it, she favors her devotee with all these four goals. She provides him with a healthy body and mind by which he can participate in the abundant possibilities of life that are created for him. In the light of his own sense of righteousness and the opportunities given to him by grace, she fills his mind with the right kind of desires and ultimately, through proper unfoldment, she gives him the final release or emancipation.

The *yantra* is in the form of a fully opened lotus with eight inner petals and eight outer petals. The *mantra* given for meditation is *śrīṃ*, the same as the previous verse. According to the *Upaniṣads,* the Self is called *svarājya,* meaning one's native country. When one is fully established in his *svarājya* his status is of the *samrāt or* emperor. With the help of this meditation, the devotee establishes himself or herself in all the four realms of *dharma, artha, kāma,* and *mokṣa* and identifies his oneness with the manifested as well as the unmanifested Absolute.



*śrīṃ*

## VERSE FIVE

*haristvāmārādhya praṇatajana saubhāgya jananīm*
*purā nārībhūtvā puraripumapi kṣobhamanayat*
*smaro'api tvām natvā ratinayanalehyena vapuṣā*
*munīnāmapyantaḥ prabhavati hi mohāya mahatām*

O Great Mother, once the great Mahāviṣṇu, having
worshipped you (well known as the bestower of
happiness on all those who are devoted to you),
changed himself into a woman of exquisite beauty.
He caused agitation even in the mind of the great *Śiva*,
well known for his restraint as the burner of the three cities.
Kāma, the god of love, whose body is invisible,
smears his erotic enjoyability on those whom he chooses;
they are licked by the goddess of erotics and thereby
confusion is caused, even in the minds of great sages
who are well established in their meditations.

The reference here is to the story of the churning of the ocean of milk by the *devas*, the shining ones, and the *asuras*, the dark forces. According to this myth, the milk ocean is the abode of Viṣṇu, the god who preserves the universe. It is also the realm of all specific values. As it is the realm of actual life, it is also the battleground of the bright and dark forces, the *devas* and *asuras*, respectively. Both of these forces were vying with one another for immortality and supremacy over life. Brahmā the creator advised them to churn the ocean of life to gain the elixir of immortality. As the churning could not be done by any group separately, it was agreed as a joint endeavor. The great Mount Mandara was used as the churning rod. Just as the ocean of life is beginningless, it is also said to have no bottom. Therefore, it became necessary to find a ground for the churning rod to rest upon. Viṣṇu, being the preserver, changed into a turtle and provided that ground. The rope used for churning was none other than the great serpent Ananta, endless time. The shining ones were holding the tail and the demons were at the head.

Tradition runs that as a result of the churning fourteen precious things appeared one by one on the surface of the milk ocean. These were: *airāvata*, the celestial white elephant; *gadā*, the mace; *kaumodakī*, the *pārijāta* tree; *uccaiśśravas*, the white horse; *kāmadhenu*, the desire-granting cow; *śaṅkha*, the conch shell; *candra*, the crescent moon; Lakṣmi, goddess of grace and abundance; *dhanuḥ*, the great bow; Astreya, virgin of the stars; *kaustubha*, the jewel of great lustre; Rambha, the celestial nymph of great beauty; Dhanvantari, god of medicine; and *amṛta*, the elixir of immortality.

After all the churning, the snake was so agitated that it vomited *kālakūṭa*, the world poison, and all the *devas* and *asuras* were terrified at the sight. To calm the fears of all, *Śiva* drank the poison and saved the world. Then, as soon as the *amṛta* was out of the ocean, a demon snatched it away from the god Dhanvantari and ran away. It was the wish of all the gods that the demon forces not become immortal by partaking of the *amṛta*. So at this critical moment, Viṣṇu turned to the Universal Mother in great devotion. It was with her grace that he changed himself into the very incarnation of beauty and assumed the name Mohinī, the grand seductress. Upon seeing her, all were charmed and even the demon gladly handed over the bowl of *amṛta*. After this incident, *Śiva* remembered how beautiful Viṣṇu looked as a woman and wanted to see her form again. This is referred to here as Viṣṇu causing agitation to *Śiva*, the god of restraint.

Face of the goddess. *Stone sculpture. India. Date unknown.*

*The goddess in her many transformations highlights the various faces of beauty with its attractions and paradoxes.*

The *Saundaryalaharī*, composed to glorify beauty as the highest form of truth and goodness, treats beauty as a deluding force as well as an emancipating one, and in doing so refers to one of the most difficult epistemological stumbling blocks in the field of philosophy. This is the paradox around which center problems like the One and the many, being and becoming, and the transcendental and the immanent. Here *tripurāntaka*, the god of destruction, is allegorically said to be in love with the manifestation of *tripurasundari*, the goddess of beauty, which is not possible without causing violation to his own nature. This paradox is really the hardest crux of philosophy. Rāmānuja overcomes it with a revision of Śankara's *anirvacanīya khyāti*, the error of indeterminism. According to Śankara, this paradox is like the assumption that the wave has a reality other than the water or that the blue color of the sky has a reality other than that of the sky itself. These, according to him, are transitory projections which are neither real nor unreal. In the above-mentioned story, the exciting beauty of the illusory seductress was only a momentary phenomenon superimposed on the reality of Viṣṇu who was never a female. Similarly, the universe is a phenomenal superimposition, in the form of Nature, on *Śiva*, the eternal principle of transcendence, who is free of all the triple qualities of Nature, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The Real is unchanging. The water is real, making the wave unreal. By the same token, the world is unreal and only *Śiva* is real.

This position of Śankara is reviewed, criticized and rejected by Rāmānuja. So long as water remains, one wave will be replaced by another wave, and the nature of water causing a wave is as real as the water itself. Therefore, the principle of waves has a reality in which the reality of the water itself participates. We find this same position stated in this verse of Śankara, who must have corrected his earlier position in this book of hymns which he wrote after completing all of his major commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gīta*, the *Upaniṣads*, and the *Brahma Sūtras*. In this revised sense, it is *Śiva*, the burner of the three cities, providing the ground for the manifestation of beauty in all the three cities.

The science of semantics in India is called *sphoṭadarśana*. *Sphoṭa* means to burst. It has an abruptness: there is no time needed for the meaning to come to the mind after listening to the word. The meaning of each word is triggered forth by the articulated sound itself. Beauty also has this arresting quality. Its impact on the senses and mind is like a flash of lightning. The esoteric study implied in this is called *sādhya siddha āsana vidyā*. *Sādhya* means the possibility of attainment. *Siddha* means what is actually attained. *Āsana* is a posture or foundation. And *vidyā* means science. In other words, it is called the science of actualizing the potential implied in the possible.

## *VERSE SIX*

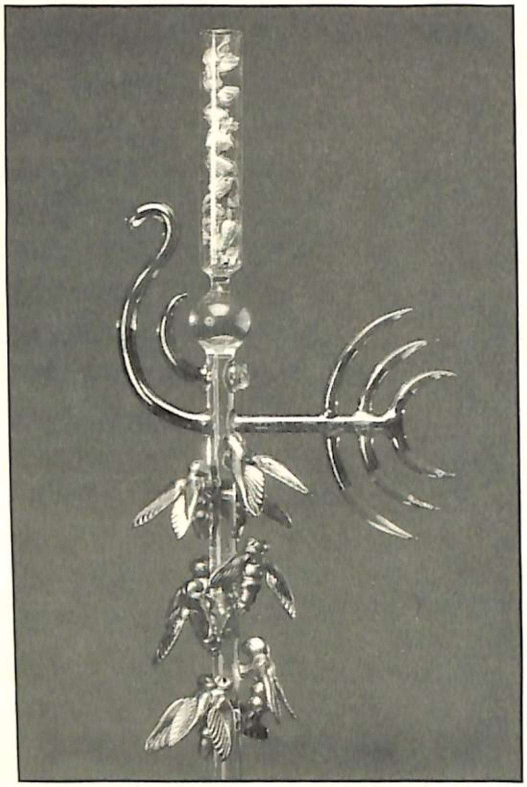
*dhanuḥ pauṣpam maurvī madhukaramayī pañcaviśikhāḥ*
*vasantasāmanto malaya marudāyodhana rathaḥ*
*tathāpyekassarvam himagirisute kāmapi kṛpām*
*apāṅgāt te labdhvā jagadidmanaṅgo vijayate*

O Daughter of the Snowy Peak, just deriving from your
glance askance whatsoever grace he could,
With flowery bow and bumblebee string,
and five-flowered dart and springtide for minister,
All these as one withal, mounting the chariot
of the mountain breeze, he victorious reigns, the god of love.

According to Indian mythological tradition, *Śiva* was at one time immersed in blissful contemplation on Mount Kāilāsa in the Himalayas. Wanting *Śiva* to generate progeny to aid in the scheme of genesis, the *devas* sent Kāma, the god of desire, to excite *Śiva*. They wanted him to approach the goddess Umā, or Pārvatī, who is praised in this work as the Universal Mother. To obtain *Śiva* as her husband, Pārvatī had undergone severe penance; yet *Śiva* refused to stir from meditation and leave his state of bliss when the god of desire came near. Trusting in the grace of the Universal Mother, Kāma shot his flowery arrows at *Śiva* in order to arouse his erotics. Irritated by Kāma's behavior, *Śiva* opened his third eye, which is also the eye of illumination, and by its power the god Kāma was burnt to ashes.

When the *devas* found that their scheme had failed, they sent Agni, the god of fire, to *Śiva*. Agni obtained a germ of *Śiva* in the form of a six-fold spark from his third eye. These rays entered the Himalayan lake Śaravaṇa and each ray turned into a divine child. The heavenly stars the Pleides, known as *krittikas*, who according to legend are the wives of six *ṛṣis*, offered their breasts to these children. When the Divine Mother realized they were born of *Śiva*, she embraced them in love and they became one child with six heads. This child is called Subrahmaṇya or Ṣaṇmukha. Even though the god of love was burned away by a look from *Śiva's* third eye, he was granted continued existence in a disembodied state through the Mother's supplication .

This verse has a reference to *anaṅgavidya*, the science of love. The god of love, Kāma, is the *ṛṣi* associated with the meditation of this verse's *yantra*. Kāma, meaning desire, is also called Smara, remembrance, and Manmatha, agitator of the mind. He serves the Mother as a dedicated instrument, causing attractions between people and, hence, the Mother showers her grace on him. This aspect of the Mother is very much that of Venus or Aphrodite, and Kāma is similar to Eros.



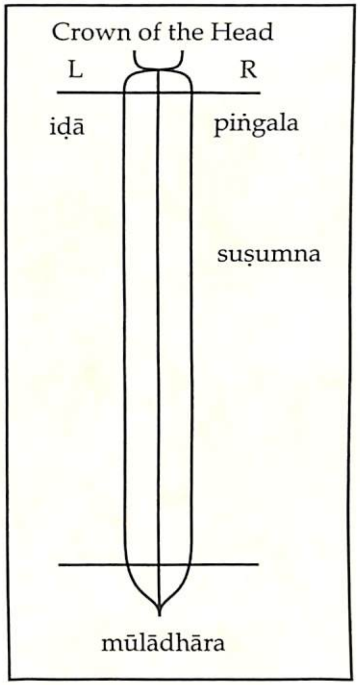
Arpa de Aveja *(Bee Harp), Susan Plum. Lampwork glass, fired lustres, metal, paint and gold leaf. America. 1992.*

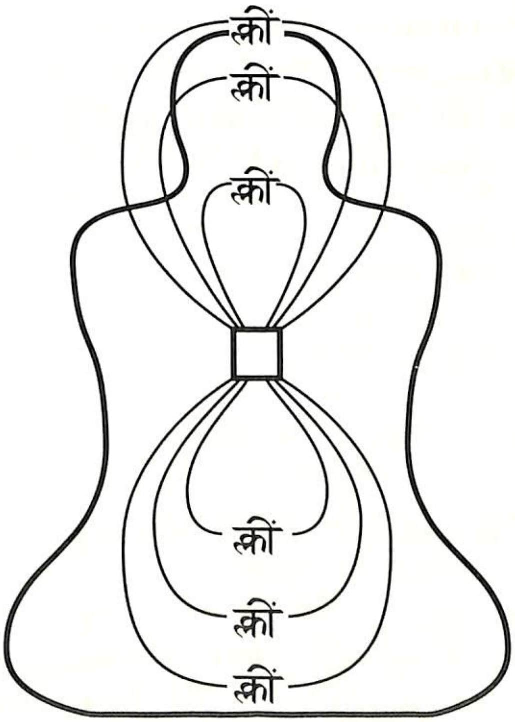
*With "flowery bow and bumblebee string," Kāma, the god of love, acts as the agent of attraction and procreation for the Devī.*

The seed *mantra* is here given as *klīṃ* and it is called *kāmabīja* or seed of love. When this seed *mantra* is meditated within the body, the first three *mantras* are to be arranged vertically along the axis of the *cakras*, first at the *viśuddhi*, the throat, then at the *ājña*, between the eyebrows, and then at the *sahasrāra*, the crown of the head. The lower *mantras* are also arranged vertically: beginning with the *maṇipūra*, the solar plexus, up to the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, the genitals, and ending at the *mūlādhāra*, the tip of the spine. The three lower placements represent *Śakti*, the three higher ones represent *Śiva*, and the desires of the three lower ones are to be related to the three higher ones. The heart is treated as the equating center between these two pairs.

The desires related to the *maṇipūra*, with regard to the beloved, are to know the nature of the beloved and to become identical with it through a process of exosmosis and endosmosis. In this scheme of meditation, the *viśuddhi* is the corresponding counterpart to the *maṇipūra*. The devotee recites psalms and hymns and praises to the beloved, God, and chants the *mantra*. While the *mantra* is being chanted, the *Śakti* aspect is conceived in the *maṇipūra* and the *Śiva* aspect is conceived in the *viśuddhi*, and a figure-of-eight movement is made by the mind, relating these two aspects in the heart. After this, in the same way, the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and the *mūlādhāra* are related, respectively, to the *ājña* and the *sahasrāra*. The desires at the *svādhiṣṭhāna* level are to participate in the love of the beloved, or the divine. The desires of the *mūlādhāra* level are to participate in the immortality of the beloved. This is achieved by raising the *kuṇḍalinī*, cutting across the *suśumna*, the central channel of the *prāṇa*, and bringing it to the *sahasrāra*.

The three pairs here are also to be looked upon as the triple aspect of *satcitānanda*. The *mūlādhāra-sahasrāra* pair refers to the *sat* or existential aspect; the *svādhiṣṭhāna-ājña* pair refers to the *cit* or the subsistence aspect; and the *maṇipūra-viśuddhi* pair refers to the *ānanda* or value aspect.





*klīṃ*

## *VERSE SEVEN*

*kvaṇat kāñcīdāmā karikalabha kumbhastananatā*
*parikṣīṇā madhye pariṇataśaraccandra vadanā*
*dhanurbāṇān pāśam sṛṇimapi dadhānā karatalaiḥ*
*purast ādāstām naḥ puramathiturāho puruṣikā*

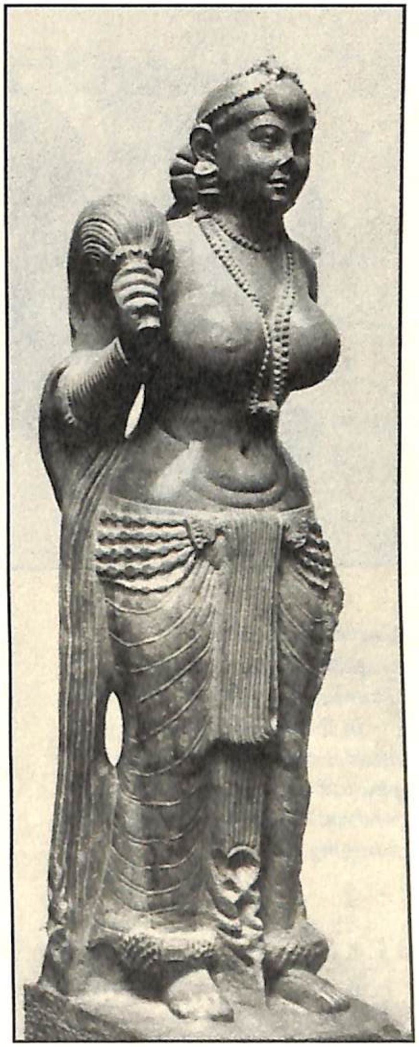
Let that dominant counter-ego form of the city burner,
through the jingling of her waist-band, bending by the bosom,
resembling bulges on an elephant's front,
very thin at the waist, with a face like the full moon,
Appear before us, holding aloft in her hands
bow with arrow, noose with goad.

The Mother as a deity is worshipped in three aspects: the gross, *sthūla*, the subtle, *sūkṣma*, and the transcendental, *parā*. The present verse describes her in the gross form. In the book *Rahasyanāma Sahsra*, this gross form is recommended as one that can be visualized by the devotee. Though the Devī is usually called *tripurasundari*, the beautifier of the three cities, in contrast to her male counterpart, *tripurāntaka*, the burner of the three cities, in this verse she is addressed as the counter-ego form of the burner of the three cities. An unusual word is used, *puruṣika*. *Puruṣa* means a man and the reference is particularly to the quality of masculinity. *Puruṣika* is, however, in the feminine gender. It means, paradoxically, the feminine form of masculinity. In other words, when the masculine in the female is understood in its most pronounced and powerful manifestation, it can be called *puruṣika*. In verse five, we have seen how *Śiva*, the annihilator, was shown to be so tempted by the beauty manifested in the preserving deity Viṣṇu that against his own nature he assumed the role of creator. This verse balances that asymmetry by bringing over the masculine quality of *Śiva* to the Devī by calling her *puruṣika*. The analogies make our minds go from the subtle to the gross backward and forward and thereby present, in one and the same form, the attributes of the gross, subtle and transcendent.

The world of manifestation called *bhava* is an endless chain of becoming. Every moment is said to be giving birth to the world of that moment. This idea has resemblance to *kṣaṇika vijñānavāda*, according to which the world comes into being in the first third of a moment, remains for another third of the moment, and disintegrates in the final third, with the antecedent moment giving birth to the following moment. These sequences are here compared to the tinkling of the bells in the girdles of the Creatrice as she paces her steps from moment to moment creating the world, which in its turn dissovles away in her own counterpart, *Śiva*.

The tinkling sound of the tiny bells is something so soft and sublime that it refers to the subtle aspect of Devī. The next reference is to the heavy breasts by which her body is bent forward. They are compared to the hard forehead of an elephant. The reference is far from anything that suggests beauty or tenderness. In India, elephants are tamed to do heavy work such as pushing trees with their foreheads. Thus, in an Indian mind, the elephant is associated with strength and vitality. The Creatrice is also the Mother who nourishes the creatures born of her. The will to live which is seen in all living beings has a dynamics and push which is hard to counter, and in the description of *māyā* as a creative force it is sometimes called *pradhāna*, creative dynamics, because its power of actualization is tremendous. The light steps of the Mother associated with the tinkling of the bells and her powerful dynamism of creativity, when taken together, produce the complexity of creation in which matter and spirit are mysteriously blended.

The stress on the harsh and dynamic vitality of the Mother is indicated in the image of the heavy breasts. It is balanced by other analogies, one



A yakṣī, female nature spirit. *Polished sandstone carving. Bihar, India. First century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta.*

*Traditional beauty in women, in Indian culture, implied large breasts, thin waists, and ample hips, with the resulting shape an allusion to the figure-of-eight sign for the eternal. Goddesses as well as human women exemplified these characteristics.*

Carved mango wood elephant. *Rājasthān, India. Twentieth century.*

*In India feminine beauty is often compared to an elephant's physical traits, especially to the forehead bulges and the ponderous, swinging gait.*

which describes the very slender waist below, *parikṣīṇā* and the other which visualizes the face above. In the iconographic presentation of the female deity, a structure in the form of a figure-of-eight movement is usually adopted, and the waist is indicated by the central crossing over in this movement. This being a verse to be meditated upon in the *maṇipūra*, the solar plexus, the description of the Devī ends with the waist and the devotee is to supply the lower part of the figure-of-eight with her own body. The face is here compared to the full moon of the summer season. The original Sanskrit word used here is *pariṇata śarat candra vadanā*. *Pariṇata* means transformed and does not necessarily mean the full moon. It can be the changing aspect of the waxing and waning of the moon. Taken in that sense, the deity can be visible or invisible and can have many changing phases.

This verse has a single *bīja mantra, klīṃ*, which is to be meditated upon in the *maṇipūra*. The symbols in the Devī's hands, such as the bow and arrows and the noose and goad, mark the frame of reference for this meditation. In these, the bow represents the mind; the five arrows, the five senses; the noose, love in the form of attachment; and the goad, the negative propensities of the mind.

क्लीं

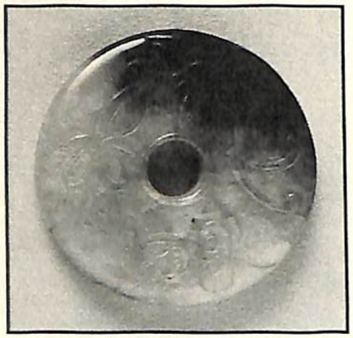
*klīṃ*

## *VERSE EIGHT*

*sudhā sindhormadhye suraviṭapi vātī parivṛte*
*maṇidvīpe nīpopavanavati cintāmaṇigṛhe*
*śivākāre mañce paramaśivaparyaṅka nilayām*
*bhajanti tvām dhanyāḥ katicana cidānandalaharīm*

Some men of rare fulfillment meditate on you
as the ecstatic bliss of the supreme Self, seated on a couch
of *Śiva*-form and having the supreme *Śiva* for a mattress,
placed in a garden of the *kadamba* trees, on an island of pearls,
in a priceless mansion of consciousness surrounded by trees
of paradise, in an infinite ocean of divine nectar.

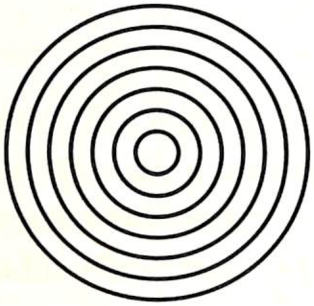
This verse refers to a *maṇḍala* with seven circles. A symbol for meditation, a *maṇḍala* is similar to a gestalt which makes a unified, meaningful configuration. This configuration can be a physical, semantic, or value formation. As the structure varies in different ensembles, *maṇḍalas* are of many types. One of the great dictums or *mahāvākyas* is "*ayam ātma brahman*" or "This Self is the Absolute." In this dictum *brahman* stands for the Absolute in its all-inclusive, cosmological sense, and *ātma* refers to the individual locus of con-



Bi (or P'i) disc. *Carved jade. China. Nineteenth century (Qing dynasty).*

*Dating in use from the Shang dynasty, carved jade discs were ritual artifacts that were important in imperial functions and considered auspicious in both form and use. They were seen by the Chinese as potent symbols of Heaven and Earth and the four cardinal directions. The outer circle corresponded to the masculine, or yang, Heaven, with the inner hole representing the feminine, or yin, Earth. This Chinese symbolism corresponds to Indian iconography of male-female relationships.*

sciousness from which the radiating consciousness can reach out to and pervade all that comes within the aegis of the Absolute. The *maṇḍala* given for this verse, which is one of seven concentric circles, implies the secret of the above-given *mahāvākya*.



The first circle, which marks the most exterior region, is described here as an infinite ocean of divine nectar. In ordinary science, a probe into reality is made by first postulating a hypothesis and then experientially ascertaining its validity. In the spiritual science of realization, there are also these two steps. Instead of formulating a tentative hypothesis, the guru or the scripture gives a conceptual picture of what is to be realized. Visualizing that picture is called initiation. What is semantically initiated is thereafter perceived through contemplation and meditation until it is experienced as a reality. The semantic visualization belongs to *cit*. Experience is the existential manifestation of that visualization and belongs to *sat*. Where the manifestation identifies the *sat* and the *cit* as one total experience, it affects the realizing consciousness as a blissful state. Hence, the dominant aspect of the Absolute in a spiritual experience is *ānanda*. Spiritual bliss, or *ānanda*, which epistemologically is referred to as the ground of all values, is described poetically as honey or elixir. Here it is called an infinite ocean of nectar. Though an ocean is boundless, a man looking at it from his ship may see it encircled by the horizon. Like that, the outer *maṇḍala* circle should be looked upon as boundless, though for the purpose of meditation one may mark it with a curved line.

It is traditionally recognized in Vedānta that one becomes what one meditates upon. When a guru gives his sacred advice for meditation on the Absolute, it is ingeniously worded to show the order in which one has to meditate. The *upadeśavākya*, or the dictum of instruction and advice, is "*tat* *tvam asi*" or "That thou art." This is very significant. Here the first word refers to *brahman* or the Absolute. One has to meditate first on the Absolute until all vestiges of duality and finitude are removed from consciousness. When the individual consciousness transcends the finitude of individuality, it regains its original state of the non-dual infinite. Thus, the "thou" aspect is not to be meditated upon. The inquiring mind itself is the "thou" and it loses its identity in "that". Following the same scheme, the infinite *ānanda* aspect of the Absolute is presented here as the initial *maṇḍala* of meditation.

God is the first cause in all theistic religions. In atheistic religions or schools of thought, a primordial substance, such as matter in modern science, is postulated as having all the potentials to unfold itself in the course of time. In religion it is a question of manifestation, whereas in science it is one of evolution. In this verse the primordial cause, the nectar of the spirit, is presented in the second *maṇḍala* circle which is placed within the first as a field of creation. Like the Biblical Genesis which presents a vegetative world with water, air, sun, moon, and a heavenly garden to be the habitation of man, this second *maṇḍala* is pictured as *suraviṭapivāṭī*. *Sura* means divine; *viṭapa* is a tree; and *vāṭī* is a garden of divine trees. The concept is very much the same as the Biblical Garden of Paradise.

From this we pass on to the matrix of values. As space and time are inconceivable terms unless related to an observer's mind, a value has no significance where there is no mind to judge it. What is basic to value is its affectivity, and hence a circumlimitation is to be made in the field of infinite bliss to make it capable of manifesting itself as experienced bliss. This third *maṇḍala* circle is therefore called the island of the pearls of consciousness. Within this island an environment for spiritual meditation is envisaged with reference to the next *maṇḍala* circle, the fourth, as the garden of the *kadamba* trees. The blue of the sky and the ocean are associated in the mind of Indian poets as symbolic of the infinite. The *kadamba* tree in the spring season is overladen with bunches of blue flowers, and is associated with the childhood pranks of Kṛṣṇa. The very mention of the *kadamba* tree brings the idea of Kṛṣṇa. Hence, the mention of the garden of the *kadamba* tree is only to create a poetic atmosphere.

Bamboo grove. *Laoshan Temple, Shandung, China.*

*This grove of bamboo at a Taoist temple and monastary in China is a place for meditation. The young bamboo shoots are carved with the characters of poems and prayers.*

In the ancient *ashrams*, or spiritual homes of wisdom teachers, there was always a special grove dedicated for meditation and penance. These groves are called *tapovana*. In this garden of *kadamba* trees is located the *tapogṛha*, the special house for meditation. In this verse, that is called the *cintāmaṇigṛha* and is marked here as the fifth *maṇḍala* circle. It means the house of the pearls of consciousness. In this house is located the *maṇḍala* that has to serve as the altar for the deity. The base of the altar is called *śivākāramañca*. *Mañca* means the couch resting on four legs; *ākāra* means form; and *Śiva* means the Absolute. In the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* the Absolute is described as *catuṣpāda*, the four-limbed. The Absolute that is symbolized with *aum* also has four quarters. They are the four aspects of consciousness: the wakeful or objective, the dream or subjective, the unconscious, and the transcendental. Here the same is conceived to be an altar stand within the *maṇḍala*. This comes as the sixth circle.

The seventh circle is referred to as a mattress of eternal consciousness, termed here as *paramaśivaparyaṅka*. *Parama* means the Absolute; *śiva* means a state of harmony, peace and auspiciousness; *paryaṅka* means a mattress. In Indian iconography the seat of the deity is very important. Brahmā has a lotus for his seat. The seat of the deity of this *maṇḍala* is the Absolute itself. Within the seven concentric circles of this *maṇḍala*, the deity is marked as the central locus. She is here depicted in her transcendental state, not the gross one of the previous verse, and is described as the ecstatic bliss of supreme consciousness, *citānandalaharī*.

The meditation of this verse is one of the most important disciplines in Tantra and it is known as *śrīvidyā*. The *yantra* used for *śrīvidyā* is the *śrīcakra*. It is drawn with four triangles interposed one over the other with base up and with five triangles interposed one over the other with the apex up. The center is marked with a dot. A *śrīcakra* is usually made on a gold or silver plate in which the triangles are marked with precious stones and the plate is worshipped with external rituals. Or the *śrīcakra* is visualized in the heart and meditated upon as explained in this commentary. The external worship is called *bahirākāśapūja* and the meditation in the heart is called *daharākāśapūja*. Those who desire to visualize the deity with form think of the couch as Mount Kāilāsa and the seat as the lap of *Śiva*, and they see the deity as the most beautiful incarnation of womanhood, *tripurasundari*.

Maṇḍala. *Embossed copper plate. India. Twentieth century. One of the many types of* maṇḍala *used for the goddess worship discipline of Tantra.*

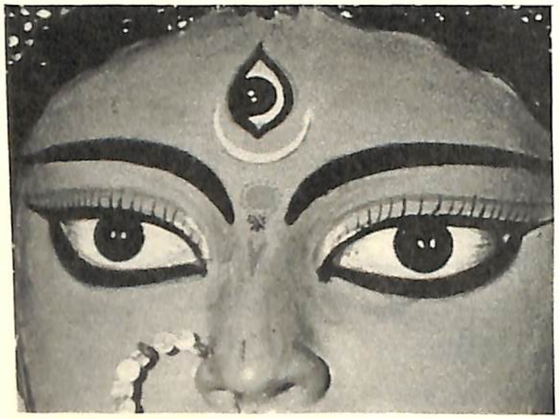
# *VERSE NINE*

*mahīm-mūlādhāre kamapi maṇipūre hutavaham*
*sthitam svādhiṣṭhāne hṛdi marutam ākāśamupari*
*mano'pi bhrūmadhye sakalamapi bhitvā kulapatham*
*sahasrāre padme saha rahasi patyā viharase*

The earth place in the *mūlādhāra*, water in the *maṇipūra*,
Fire in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, air in the heart, with space above,
And amid eyebrows placing the mind,
while breaking through, You do sport with your Lord secretly
in the thousand-petaled lotus.

In the previous verse the relation of the individual self to the universal Self was represented through a *maṇḍala* of seven concentric circles. In this verse we are given a functional structure for the relation of the personal self to the universal Self. The macrocosm in Sanskrit is called *brahmāṇḍa, aṇḍa* meaning an egg from which the expanding universe is endlessly projecting its various nebular and stellar systems. The same is taken as a model of the causal origin of the microcosmic world. An individual system that generates, projects, and unfolds itself as the unitary function of an organism is called *pindāṇḍa*. Though in the quantitative and, for that reason, in the qualitative expression, the infinitely vast universe with its fire-spitting stars and swirling clouds of nebulae is different from a living organism, both belong to the same homogenous principle, which is the source of all elements and elementals.

The Sānkhyan concept of the Absolute as a dual principle of spirit, *puruṣa*, and nature, *prakṛti*, is revalued and accepted by Vedānta and Tantra. In the Vedāntic context, the Absolute is seen as having both a changless vertical status, in the present context *Śiva*, and an ever-horizontalizing state of emanation or manifestation, which in the present text is attributed to the Devī as *Śakti*. The spirit or *Śiva* aspect of the Absolute, while being homogenous, changeless, indivisible, whole and attributeless, should be considered as the ground of all existence, *sat*. It is also the pure self-luminous principle of consciousness that relates, integrates and provides the universe itself with an eye to see its magnitude and a mind to ponder over its complexity, *cit*. Finally, it is the grand plethora of value systems ranging from causal efficiency to finality, which are treated in this text as *ānanda*.



The eyes of the goddesss. *Painted statue. India. Twentieth century.*

*The two physical eyes represent awareness of the physical world with its dimensions of time and space. Between them is the red bindi dot indicating the* bindu *or locus of consciousness, which is often found at the center of* maṇḍalas. *Above the bindi dot is the crescent moon, symbol of* Śiva, *and the third eye or fully opened eye of wisdom and realization.*

If generic *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* construct the vertical axis of the Absolute, the ontological and existential causality that sparks off in all directions is the primal *Śakti* that assumes innumerable specific complexities to proliferate as *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* literally means that which duplicates, replicates and proliferates. What corresponds to the *cit* in *prakṛti* is its articulation, communication and passive expression. These come through the spoken or written word, through indicative signs and symbols, or through provision for semantic and noetic comprehension.

*Sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* become reversed, as if they were casting their own shadows into three forms of negative functions, a process usually referred to in the Vedāntic context as *pratyagātma*, the pure Self, changing over into *cidābhāsa*, the apparent self. As the phenomenal world is constituted by these triple negative forces, the entire empirical experience has in reality only a negative status, though it becomes very pronounced as the gross and objective facts of experience. Thus, ironically, the positive fact of *Śiva* looks negative and the negative *Śakti* is counted as dynamic and positive.

The triple forces hinted at here are those of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*.

*Ānanda* is operating in its horizontal function as *sattva, cit* as *rajas*, and *sat* as *tamas*. All creations or projections are operations involving the transformation of one aspect of *sattva* into another aspect. The formal and qualitative state of the material for transformation, the process of transformation and the end result of transformation are all attended by specific modualtions of *cit*. The value dynamics remaining in the material chosen for transformation as a causal factor and its unfolding into an actualized final cause belong to *ānanda*. Vedānta does not see any duality in the material, efficient, and final causes; hence, in Sanskrit this non-dual aspect of creation is called *abhinnanimitta upādāna kāraṇa*. *Abhinna* means inseparable; *nimitta* is efficient; and *upādāna* is the material which is undergoing change through the unfolding of the final cause. When a potter makes a pot, the clay is the material cause, the potter is the efficient cause, and the image of the pot in the potter's mind which finally becomes actualized as the pot is the final cause. Thus understood, all of nature, which includes the starry heavens above and the animated system here with its complexities, its moral and social orders, is only a series of transformations.

The first stage of transformation is conceived of as a process of quintiplication. Principles of five elements are projected, each with its own qualitative characteristics. The first in the series is *ākāśa*; it has no equivalent term in English. Aspects of a number of terms such as sky, ether, space, time and ground are to be put together to form an integrated concept which stands for *ākāśa*. The definiton of *ākāśa* in the *Sāṅkhya Darśana* is *avakāśadātṛ*, that which makes it possible for an object to exist. The space occupied by an object is, as it were, donated by *ākāśa*. We may say the entirety of space is one aspect of *ākāśa*. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* Yājñavalkya teaches Gārgi that the warp and the woof of the universe is *ākāśa*, and that the structure of the Absolute is in *ākāśa*. It is to be known as both spiritual and non-spiritual. Its quality is vibration. As vibration indicates direction of movement, kinetic frequencies, and dynamics, the sequential quality of *ākāśa* produces time. Thus *ākāśa* as a manifested reality becomes the time-space continuum. It is also to be conceived of as a unified field in which everything functions according to the assigned nature of each element. In fact, *ākāśa* becomes the first step towards physical creation. As sound, which in its graded operation controls the entire field of the noetics and semiotics of the world of conception and expression, *ākāśa* becomes the ground of mental, psychic and spiritual manifestations, which find their natural home in the world of elements.

In the natural process of creation, the next property has to necessarily be touch, contact, cohesion, and reaction. All these characterize the second element, air, which is more pronouncedly materialistic. *Vāyu* or air is, in one sense, *ākāśa* a bit more horizontalized. The Sanskrit word *vāyu*, though translated as air, should not be looked upon as a gas. It is actually the great womb of fusion and combustion which generates all the physical elements, gaseous, liquid, and solid. According to the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools of Indian philosophy, the basic material of the physical universe is *paramāṇu*. *Parama* means absolute and *aṇu* means a monad. It has no dimensions except a mathematical location. Only by the coming together or contact and structural cohesion of several *paramāṇus* is one *aṇu* or atom generated. *Vāyu* is the field for generation of *aṇus* or atoms. Hence, it is misleading to identify it with the air, which is only a phenomenon of the atmosphere. The other property of *vāyu* symbolizes the realization of the possible on the ground of the actual. Therefore, the higher functioning of the mind in spiritual visions, psychic experiences, intuitions and revelations are all considered aspects of the manifestation of *vāyu*.

The third element is fire, *agni*, which is easily associated with thermodynamics and luminosity. When the basic elements of the two earlier emanations from *prakṛti*, *ākāśa*, and *vāyu* horizontalize still further, frictions, combustions, and fissures multiply a billion-fold and the unified field of *ākāśa* becomes filled with innumerable patterns of radiation in the form of light and heat. While on the existential level this third element is identified with fire, in the world of consciousness it is seen as the lower mind and its several propensities. Between mind and matter the role of *agni* can be observed in all positive and active emergence, and in all the creative functionings of biological, biochemical, psychophysical and psychochemical processes. Its major role, however, is as a complement to sound, and as that factor which produces the boundless network of visual forms on which rest all perceptual experiences. The empirical world can be seen dichotomously as a combination of name and form. That is why the eminent physicist Erwin Schrodinger defined the world as a construct of percepts and concepts. These first three elements, *ākāśa, vāyu and agni*, so very fundamental to life, constitute the first three steps in creation. The gross, material body of a concrete manifestation comes from the two succeeding elements, water and earth.

One of the greatest miracles is the transformation of a gas into a liquid. When two hydrogen atoms are joined with one oxygen, both gases change their natural properties and give way to something entirely new. The invisible becomes visible. It can be touched. Its form can be seen. It satisfies most of our notions of the concrete world. Further, it is the first major rung in the evolutionary ladder where lifeless matter becomes animated. Just as modern science considers water the necessary medium to generate the first form of life, Indian mythology visualizes the first occurence of life in water. They even name God as *nārāyaṇa, naram* meaning water and *āyana* meaning dwelling. *Nārāyaṇa* thus means the one who dwells in water. Water is the symbol of vitality and all forms of emotion, ranging from aesthetic feeling to the highest forms of mystical exaltation.Finally, there emerges the end limit of gross manifestation in the form of earth. The earth in principle stands for everything gross, concrete and objective. It is the ontological, existential base of life and the quality of earth is fragrance or smell.

In the scheme of Sānkhyan evolution, the five elements given above cannot exist in a pure form independent of one another; rather they combine according to a certain scheme of proportion. In Sanskrit the process of quintiplication is called *pañcīkaraṇa*. In this process, each element is divided into two and one of these halves is divided into four. One-fourth of each element is assigned to the other four elements. Thus, each of the five elements contains one-eighth part of all elements.

The cosmic functioning of the universe is attributed to *tripurasundari*, the principle of beauty in three spheres. Its counterpart which functions in the individual organism is called *kuṇḍalinī*. In its gross aspect, *kuṇḍalinī* is looked upon as a vital force having for its instruments the central nervous system, the respiratory system and the circulatory system. Anything that conducts air, energy or liquid from one part of the body to another is called *nāḍi*. The Tantric system considers the area between the anus and the genitals as the base of the *nāḍi* system. It believes that in this place nine major *nāḍis* branch off, each splitting further into individual systems taking care of specific functions. It is believed that there are 72,000 such individual units apart from the several billion capillaries. In fact, every particle of the body has its own spiritual and material aspect.

From the above-said base, three *nāḍis* are vertically arranged running through the spine and reaching the crown of the head. These three *nāḍis* are called the *iḍā*, the left side, the *piṅgala*, the right side, and the *suṣumna*, the central channel. On this vertical arrangement six synergic fields are located. They are the *mūlādhāra*, basal foundation; *svādhiṣṭhāna*, psychic base; *maṇipūra*, solar plex; *anāhata*, heart plex; *viśuddhi*, throat plex; and *ājña*, the place between the eyebrows. The 72,000 systems of *nāḍis* have their correspondence with these six synergic fields. These *nāḍis* are operated upon by three types of dynamics, which are known as *ichāśakti*, volitional dynamics, *jñānaśakti*, knowledge dynamics, and *kriyāśakti*, action dynamics. The unconscious and involuntary functions of the body are attributed to the *kriyāśakti* of the individual body. The unknown plan by which the various cosmic systems operate and by which natural phenomena cause the cyclic changes in the world are attributed to the *karmaśakti* of *tripurasundari*. *Jñānaśakti* comes from the primordial *cit* aspect of the Absolute. In its purest state it has no duality and no dichotomous division of subject and object. When *cit* horizontalizes and becomes *caitanya*, it becomes individuated. In a further state of horizontalization, it becomes the *caitanya* or animating consciousness of the individual splitting into the consciousness of subject and object.

The subjective consciousness having for its central reference the idea of "I" is called *ahanta*. Consciousness in the form of impressions, formal identification, and ideas of relation and value constitute the objective counterpart and are called *idanta*. When knowledge is circumlimited as subjective or objective it is called *sopādhika*. When knowledge is freed of this limitation and shines as pure consciousness, it is *ātmajñāna* or Self-knowledge. The empirical consciousness constituted of countless objects and corresponding ego relations is called *anātmajñāna*, the knowledge of the non-Self. When a thing in itself is known in its truest nature, knowledge is called *yathārtha*, real knowledge. When one thing is mistaken for another it is called *ayathārthajñāna*. All forms of knowledge relating to the subject as "I" and "mine" are *jīvajñāna*, individual knowledge. And all sense impressions are *indriyajñāna* or knowledge of the senses. The varieties of knowledge enumerated here come under the category of *jñānaśakti* of the *kuṇḍalinī*. It is the part of the universe which is often referred to as the will of God.

The *cakras* are arranged according to a sound system. The *iḍā* and the *piṅgala* are like two spiral ganglia beginning from the *mūlādhāra* and ending, respectively, in the *nāḍis* that regulate the breath of the left and right nostrils. The modern concept of the DNA and the RNA double helixes looks very similar to that of the *iḍā* and *piṅgala*. The only difference is the postulate of the *suṣumna* as a third column in which the other two have to find their integration for final absorption or *samādhi*. This structural picture is to be understood as complementary to the *maṇḍalas* described in the previous verse.

## *VERSE TEN*

*sudhādhāra sāraiś caraṇayugāḷāntarvigaḷitaiḥ*
*prapañcam siñcantī punarapi rasāmnāya mahasaḥ*
*avāpya svām bhūmim bhujaganibham adhyuṣṭavalayam*
*svamātmānam kṛtvā svapiṣi kulakuṇḍe kuhariṇi*

O Mother! You reside in the body as *kuṇḍalinī*
at the base of the *nāḍis,* in the form of a serpent
making a *maṇḍala* and sleeping in the hollow of it,
having found your home there. The joy in which
you are bathed is none other than the nectar of immortality
that drips from the tips of your own toes,
as you are the same *tripurasundari* who nourishes the universe.

This verse makes special reference to the *kuṇḍalinī,* to the *nāḍis,* and to the *cakras.* The three major *nāḍis* which run downward from the *ājña* to the *mūlādhāra* are the *iḍā* on the left side, the *piṅgala* on the right side, and the *suṣumna* in the middle. These *nāḍis* are divided into three sections horizontally. The region which includes the *mūlādhāra* and the *svādhiṣṭhāna* is the *āgneyakhaṇḍa,* the region of fire; that which includes the *maṇipūra* and the *anāhata* is the *saurakhaṇḍa,* the region of the sun; and that which includes the

Nāga stones. *Carved stone stele. Mysore Palace, India. Twentieth century.*

*The* nāga *or serpent is, in Indian iconography, commonly associated with fertility. Many women devotees place these carved stones at the base of a sacred tree with the hope of ensuing pregnanancy. As a symbol of fecundity, the* nāga *is often part of the Devī's retinue. The serpent is, as well, indicative of* kuṇḍalinī *energy, a function of* śakti *as it rises through the* cakras *of the human body. The discipline of* kuṇḍalinī *energy leads to the union of dualities and the attainment of wisdom.*

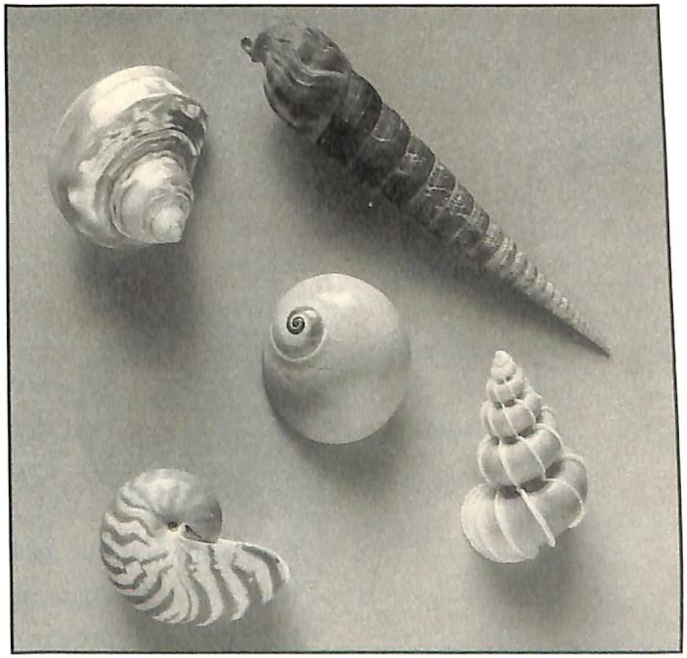
*viśuddhi* and the *ājña* is the *somakhaṇḍa*, the region of the moon. The region above the *svādhiṣṭhāna* is called the *rudragranthi*, the matrix of dissolution; the region above the *anāhata* is the *viṣṇugranthi*, the matrix of preservation; and the region above the *viśuddhi* is the *brahmagranthi*, the matrix of creation.

Flowing through the *iḍā* is the vital solar force, *sūrya*, and through the *piṅgala* flows the vital lunar force, *candra*. These vital forces that constitute life are generated in the lunar region and they are conducted through the *iḍā* and the *piṅgala* to the *kuṇḍalinī*. Because of the constant flow of the exhilarating nectar of the lunar and solar forces, the *kuṇḍalinī* remains sleeping at the base of the *nāḍis*, as though drunk. If this flow is choked in the throat plex, lunar, and in the heart plex, solar, the *kuṇḍalinī* will be starved of external stimuli. Thus provoked, the *kuṇḍalinī* will unloosen its *maṇḍala*-like coils and will rise up in the *suśumna*. In its upward ascent it will break through the six synergic centers, the *cakras*, and through the three matrices. In the *sahasrāra*, the crown of the head, the individuated *kuṇḍalinī* establishes its identity with *tripurasundari*, the Universal Creatrice. This will result in the downward descent or flow of the released energy of the *sahasrāra*.

The Self in the individual is an aspect of *Śiva*, whereas the *kuṇḍalinī* is an aspect of *tripurasundari*. Though *Śiva* as the all-transcending Absolute is unaffected by anything, the relative function of an ever-changing universe coexists with *Śiva* through the function of *tripurasundari*. In the case of the individual self, it is not free of the binding influence of *kuṇḍalinī*, which is a fractional aspect of *tripurasundari*. The strangest paradox in this concept is that of the binding and releasing potentials of the *kuṇḍalinī*. When knowledge becomes perverted, as in the case of identifying the body and the senses and the mind with the Self, the triple forces of *jñāna*, *icha* and *karma* become binding factors. Wrong identification leads to wrong desires and volitions, and relativistic desires and volitions generate binding *karma*. One *karma* leads to another and, thus, *jñāna*, *icha* and *karma* become evil forces. A life bound this way is dependant on the physical body, and thus the immortal Self becomes an imprisoned spark within the meshes of a body. Release from this is *mokṣa* or *mukti*. To turn the mind away from the deluding forces of perverted *jñāna*, *icha* and *karma*, the *kuṇḍalinī* should be awakened. When the *kuṇḍalinī* wakes and raises itself in the *suṣumna*, the unfoldment of the potential forces in each *cakra* is experienced by the yogi as though he were passing through six cities of immaculate ecstasy. In the previous verse, we have seen the arrangement of the *cakras* which proceed from the *mūlādhāra* upward to the *sahasrāra*. In the present verse we are given a description of the flow of the released energy from the *sahasrāra* downward, flushing the six *cakras*, the nine *nāḍi* channels, the three *grandthis*, and the 72,000 *nāḍi* points.

*Kuṇḍalinī* as a general term covers the entire life principle and the psychosomatic structure and function of the individual organism. In its specific sense, it is a dormant force which lies buried at the base of the spinal column. The awakened *kuṇḍalinī* is described by yogis as having no physical status, and it is to be understood as something similar to an electrical force which flashes between the *mūlādhāra* and the *sahasrāra* causing tremendous inner vibrations and luminosity.

This verse is meditated upon with the aid of the *śrīcakra*. The aspirant has to sit in the lotus pose and, closing the mouth of the alimentary canal, pull the *apāna* upward, generating the *agni* of the fire principle in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*.



Ocean shells.

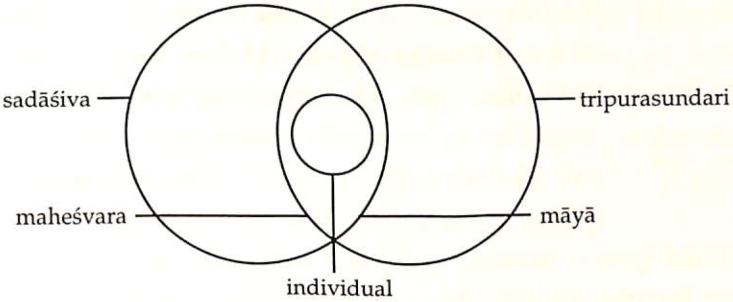
*The spiraling pattern of these shells refers to the innate mathematical structure with which* Śakti *manifests the universe.*

# *VERSE ELEVEN*

*caturbhiḥ śrīkaṇṭhaiḥ śivayuvatibhiḥ pañcabhirapi*
*prabhinnābhiśambhornavabhirapi mūlaprakṛtibhiḥ*
*tryaścatvārimśadvasudala kalāśratrivalaya*
*trirekhabhissārthaṃ tava śaraṇakoṇāḥ pariṇatāḥ*

Four *cakras* pertaining to *Śiva* and also
five *cakras* pertaining to *Śakti;*
apart from those of *Śiva,* make nine
pertaining to the primordial nature.
Counting also eight- and sixteen-petaled phases respectively
enclosed in three circles with six lines:
such make forty-three together your matured abode.

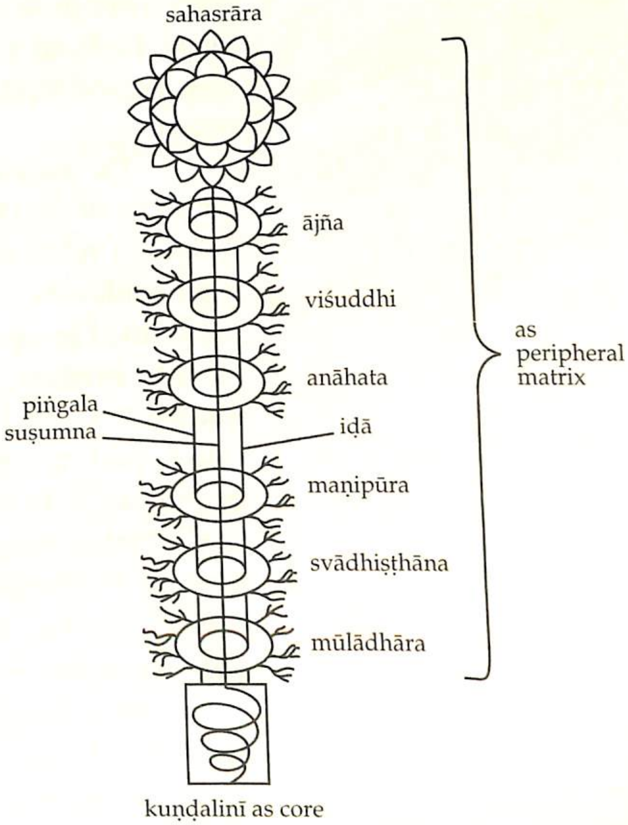
In the earlier verses the microcosmic foundation of the individual organism was schematically equated to the macrocosmic creation. The ground of creation in the macrocosm is *sadāśiva*, the ever-transcendent, and the creative force is *tripurasundari*, the grand harmonizing coordinator of things and events. In the microcosm the place for *sadāśiva* is taken by *maheśvara*, the lord of beings, and the place for *tripurasundari* is given to *māyā*. *Māyā* has the power to produce vital forces (*pradhāna*); to multiply (*prakṛti*); to veil and segregate the individual from the universal (*avidyā*); to cause right knowledge (*vidyā*); to cause the phenomenal illusion *(aparā)*; and to identify with the transcendental (*parā*).

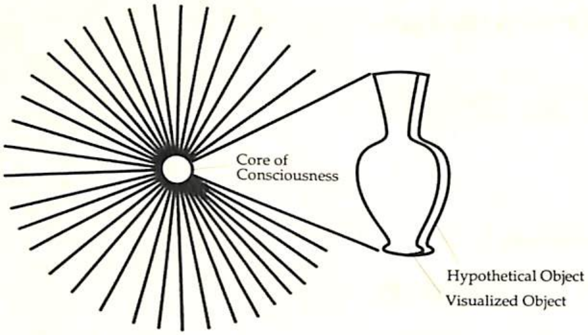

sadāśiva
tripurasundari
maheśvara
māyā
individual

As the limiting and creative aspect of *tripurasundari*, *māyā* is referred to in this book as *kuṇḍalinī*. The *kuṇḍalinī* operating in the individual has a nuclear core and a peripheral matrix. It is structured somewhat as shown below. The *kuṇḍalinī* as the core operates negatively like an electromagnetic force to activate the periphery, and the periphery in its turn carries out all psychosomatic functions.

Until the final opening and realization is experienced, the *sahasrāra* is used as the link between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between *sadāśiva* and *maheśvara*, and between *tripurasundari* and *māyā* or *kuṇḍalinī*. All sense data centripetally converges to the center of the *sahasrāra* and is then centrifugally projected or phenomenally created in time and space by *māyā*. This causes an interlacing of several angles.

As there are several million ever-changing beams and vibrations, endless patterns are woven in the *sahasrāra*. When each beam is felt in isolation, it gives a unitary notion of a single object or event or relation. When the multiple formation is experienced all at once, it becomes an orchestra of color and a tapestry of sound. The same area, the *sahasrāra*, is located


sahasrāra
ājña
viśuddhi
anāhata
piṅgala
suṣumna
iḍā
maṇipūra
svādhiṣṭhāna
mūlādhāra
as peripheral matrix
kuṇḍalinī as core



for meditation of the *śrīcakra*, which has in it two interlocking sets of four and five triangles. Of these, the group of four pertains to *Śiva* and the five pertain to *Śakti*.

The lunar region in the head symbolically represents the mirroring of all cosmic functions. That is described here as the *śrīcakra*. The central locus of the *cakra* is marked by a dot called *bindu*. The basic categories that constitute the universe are called the five *śaktikoṇas*. These *śaktikoṇas* are the five elements (*pañcabhūtas*), the five things-in-themselves (*pañcatanmātras*), the five sensations (*pañca jñānendriyas*), the five motions (*pañca karmendriyas*), and mind (*manas*). The four *śivakoṇas* or angles are the phenomenal illusion (*māyā*), pure knowledge (*śudha vidyā*), the supreme lord (*maheśvara*), and the eternal being (*sadāśiva*). These nine categories are said to converge centripetally to the locus, *bindu*, of the *śrīcakra* and to centrifugally diverge from this point to infinitude. These basic categories are otherwise called the basic wombs or *mūlayonis*. Corresponding to the nine cosmic categories, there are five *Śakti* principles in the human organism: skin, blood, flesh, fat and bones. The four *Śiva* categories in the body are the marrow, the semen, the vital forces and the life urge. The tenth womb is the *bindu* origin.

The macrocosmic and microcosmic pairs of nine basic categories give the secret of the theory of genesis according to Tantra. From *sadāśiva* to *māyā* there is a reference to four stages of horizontalization in the Absolute. To begin with we are given the concept of *sadāśiva*, the eternal being. It is to be understood as a pure vertical axis which is nondual, transcendent, and unrelated to anything. The second degree indicates the possibility of generating duality. It is called pure knowledge or *śudha vidyā*. *Vidyā* or knowledge has its counterpart in nescience or *avidyā*, and pure knowledge also indicates the application of knowledge. This points to the third category called *maheśvara*, or the lord of being. In this sense, the genesis of Tantra does not begin with the concept of a God, which comes only at the third step. The creator pushes reality to further level of horizontalization before creation takes place. The stuff of creation used by the supreme lord is phenomenal illusion or *māyā*.

From here onwards we change from the field of the Absolute to the field of relativism. Out of the triple *guṇas* or modalities of *māyā*, the five elements emerge in principle. Thereafter they are brought to a stage where materialization begins. Basic matter begins with the *tanmātra* or the thing-in-itself of each element. Quantitative structuring of the *tanmātra* gives rise to qualitative properties; these may be auditory, tactile, visual or olfactory. More precise formulation and structuring are attributed to five kinds of action, such as movement, manipulation, assimilation, projection and communication. These correspond to the organs of action, the legs, the hands, the procreative organs, the excretory organs, and the speech organs.

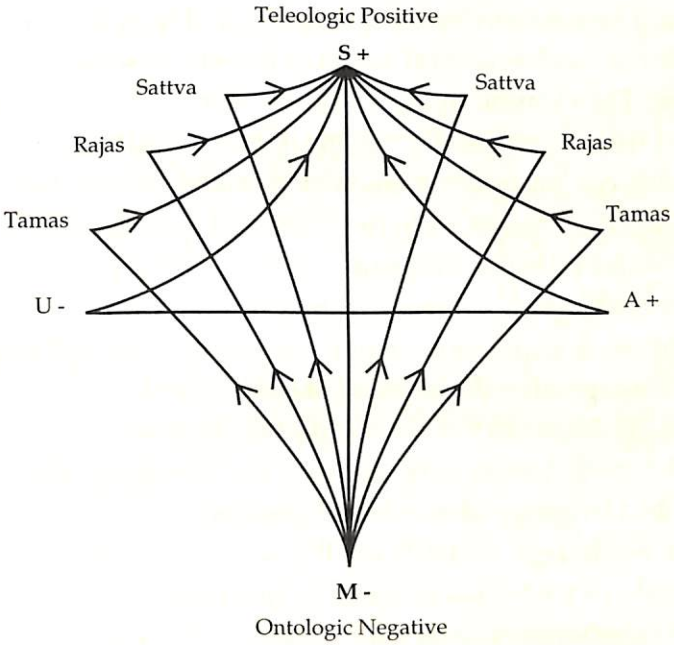
The aspirant who meditates within the *śrīcakra* thus conceives cosmic genesis as well as individual origination, and relates the scheme of individual life to the encompassing plan of universal life and finds himself placed in a meaningful system.

## *VERSE TWELVE*

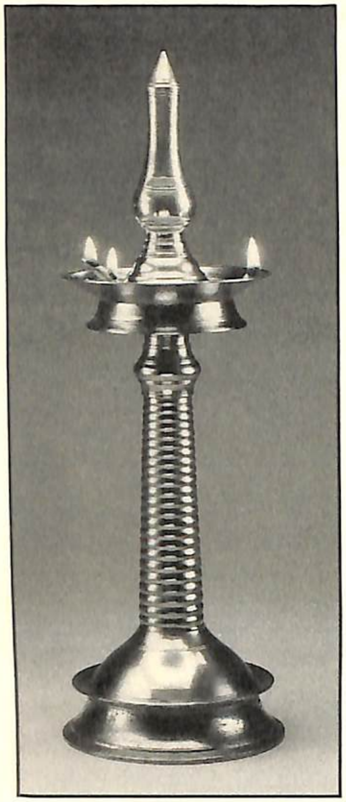
*tvadīyam saundaryam tuhina-giri-kanye tulayitum*
*kavīndrāḥ kalpante katham-api viriñci-prabhṛtayaḥ*
*yadālokautsukyād amara-lalanā yānti manasā*
*tapobhirduṣprāpām-api giriśasāyujya padavīm*

O Umā, daughter of the snowy Himavan, even great poets
like Brahmā and Bṛhaspati cannot adequately describe
your beauty, as there is no equal to you.
Brahmā and others, with great difficulty, attempt
to approximate your beauty in their creations.
Celestial nymphs, like Raṁbha and Urvaśi, engage themselves
in the impossible pursuit of achieving union with *Śiva*
by performing hard penance with the singular desire
of seeing your beauty, which is only revealed
to your divine consort, *Śiva*.

Umā of resplendent beauty, daughter of Himavān, appears in the *Keno Upaniṣad* as the supreme revealer of *brahman* and teaches Indra, the king of gods, the science of the Absolute, *brahmavidyā*. In the present verse the Mother, Devī, is identified with the same Umā. A clod of earth and a beautiful rose are both matter, except that the latter is more organized than the former. When intelligence, purposiveness, meaning, order, rhythm and harmony, which are all attributed to the spirit, determine the structuring of molecules or guide the apparent randomness of the waves or particles of matter, then matter articulates the creative or dissolving intention of the spirit. Beauty of the spirit is revealed in the structural design of organized matter. Indian philosophy does not make a dichotomous division of the stuff of creation into blind matter and omniscient spirit. To explain the genesis of the world culminating in the creation of man, the Sānkhya, Vedānta and Tantra schools of Indian philosophy use a *schema-motor* of phased horizontalization, of a pure and vertically conceived spirit changing into aspects that tend to become more and more gross, until one arrives at a dead end of proliferation into species, properties and accidents.



In the above diagram the vertical axis S-M stands for the pure spirit referred to in this text as *Śiva*. Matter, conceived of in this book as *Śakti*, is an ambivalent function of regression, as well as progression originating from the ontologic negative pole M; it is free to either horizontalize in the order of *sattva-rajas-tamas* (regression) or in the reverse order of *tamas-rajas-sattva* (progression). By regressive horizontalization spirit becomes matter, and by progressive verticalization matter becomes spirit. Both regression and progression have their dual fields of body and mind. The dead end of regression in the body brings it to the limit of morbidity and death, while in the mind regres-



Traditional brass lamp. *India.*

*Brass lamps that burn oil and come in varying sizes, from six inches high up to four-foot floor ones, were the traditional source of light in Indian temples and homes. The lamp is often seen as symbolic of the nature of Reality.*

*"Rotating, beginningless,*
*hangs the lamp of the Self,*
*burning as the shadow*
*(of true being), with the oil*
*of latent urges and mental*
*modifications as the wicks."*

*Narayana Guru*
Ātmōpadeśa Śatakam

sion brings an incapacity to function. Progression is by increased participation in the spirit until individuality merges back in the universal. What is termed above as spirit and matter are *Śiva* and *Śakti* respectively in Tantra.

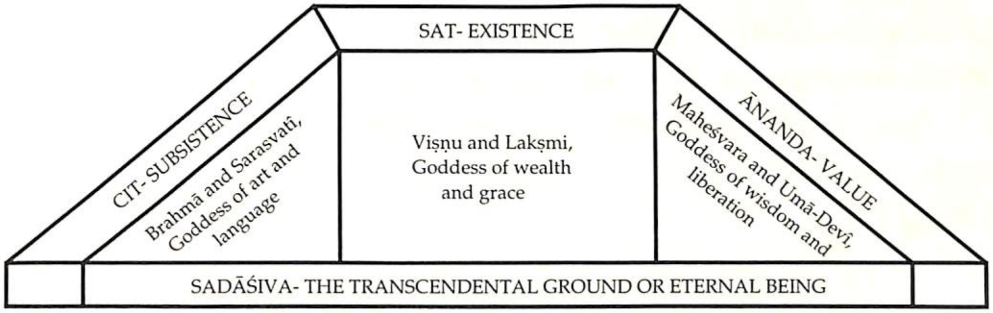
*Sattva*, as shown in the above figure, is the transparent power of *Śakti* to mirror truthfully the intelligence, goodness, beauty, rhythm and harmony of *Śiva*. *Rajas* is the translucent power of *Śakti* to energize, engineer, vivify, duplicate, create, destroy or dissolve. In essence it is kinetic. *Tamas* is an inertial force by which differently organized units of creation can be segregated to become separate entities, frozen into fixed states, screened from the irrelevant, and veiled or obscured to remain in innate or latent forms.

A and U of the horizontal axis stand, respectively, for the active-objective and the active-subjective consciousness, and M of the vertical-negative axis stands for the passive-neutral aspect of the subconscious which is devoid of all dualities. The creation of the world by *Śakti* is an eternal sport, *līla*, of Devī resulting from her manifold visions of *Śiva*. Kālidāsa, a renowned poet of ancient India, compares the relation of *Śiva* and *Śakti* to that of a lighted lamp and its radiating beams, or to the Word and its meaning.

What thus originates as the universe has two aspects, the cosmological and the psychological. All those factors that are presumably somewhere so as to register their impression on our senses and mind and so enable us to visualize and conceptualize the world of immediate perception are here termed as the cosmologic. Its subjective counterpart is the psychologic, which we experience as the inexhaustible flow of ideas and sensations that come to our mind clothed in a language of words and gestalts.

Hindu mythology abounds in allegories and symbols. While Charles Sherington thinks of ten billion nerve cells operating as an "enchanted loom" to account for consciousness, and Hans Lukas Teuber explains consciousness as "pre-programmed brain cells with enormous specificity of configuration, chemistry and connection," Hindu mythology describes it as *devaloka*, the world of the shining ones, where thirty-six billion shining monads are actively at work and the chief monad is called Indra. Indra's guru is Bṛhaspati who is analogous to Spinoza's thinking substance. While Brahmā is in charge of *Śakti's* overall creation, Bṛhaspati guides creative consciousness. Hence Brahmā and Bṛhaspati are both honored as poets. Beauty of the cosmic order and physical charm come from Brahmā, while the charm of word and thought are attributed to Bṛhaspati. In celestial nymphs like Urvaśi and Rambha, there is an archetypal blend of both the physical and spiritual norms of beauty. The poet here wants to say that even these approximations do not match the beauty of Umā, and even these celestial nymphs must undergo hard penance in order to merge into the *Śiva* state to have a glimpse of Umā's unparalleled beauty.

The course of beauty from the divine to the mundane is the unmanifested *Śiva* manifesting as Umā of immaculate beauty; Umā's beauty as final cause inspires Brahmā to create; Brahmā's poetic elation personifies into Bṛhaspati; Bṛhaspati, the guru of gods, conceives archetypal beauty; archetypal beauty visualized by the divine poet becomes actualized in the celestial nymphs; celestial nymphs like Urvaśi and Raṁbha inspire human lovers of beauty; and finally human artists and poets create beauty through the media of sound and words, rhymes and rhythms, colors and forms, action and movements.


SAT- EXISTENCE
CIT- SUBSISTENCE
Brahmā and Sarasvati, Goddess of art and language
Viṣṇu and Lakṣmi, Goddess of wealth and grace
ĀNANDA- VALUE
Maheśvara and Umā-Devī, Goddess of wisdom and liberation
SADĀŚIVA- THE TRANSCENDENTAL GROUND OR ETERNAL BEING

## *VERSE THIRTEEN*

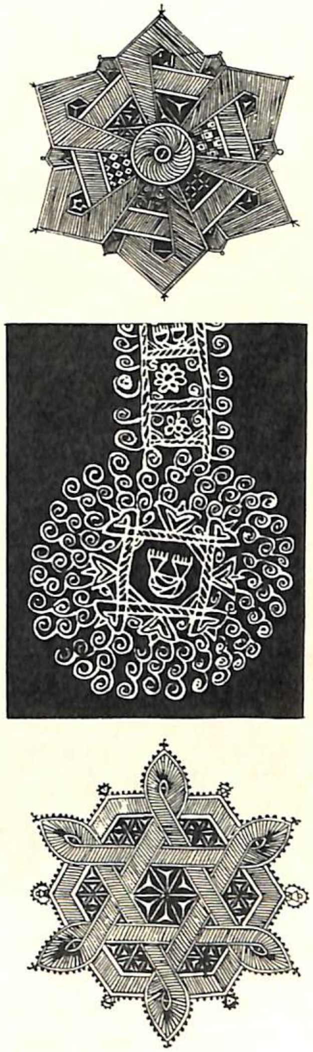
*naram varṣīyāṃsaṃ nayanavirasaṃ narmasujaḍaṃ*
*tavāpāṅgāloke patitamanudhāvanti śataśaḥ*
*gaḷadveṇībandhāḥkucakalaśavisrastasicayā*
*haṭhāt truṭyatkāñcyo vigaḷita-dukūlā yuvatayaḥ*

O Gracious Mother, if only a man were to be blessed
by a benign glance from your eyes, no matter how old he is,
nor how austere is his behavior, nor whether he knows
how to evoke conjugal pleasures, even then, after your glance,
young women in the hundreds will excitedly run after him.
In their infatuation they will forget all modesty and
will not notice the locks of their hair unloosening and falling
in disarray and their upper garments gliding away
from their buxom breasts. Neither will they realize how,
by a sudden surge of emotion, their waistbands become
unbuttoned and their silken robes fall off.

This verse is a complement to verse twelve. The classical Upaniṣadic visualization of beauty was followed in India by a long, drawn-out deterioration where for twenty centuries man's devotion was to the sensuous. Then came the great breakthrough in the European tradition of post-Goya and post-Van Gogh art, which culminated in the non-representative concept of beauty. In this verse of the seventh century, Śankara gives a redefinition of beauty as the numinous that can shine by itself inspite of the oddity of the object it chooses to illumine. This is in contrast to the usual conception of beauty as sensuous infatuation or as a prelude to erotics. What is chosen here is an old man devoid of the attractions of youthful age, good looks, light mood or erotic provocations. While everyone is supposed to be charmed by beautiful women of youthful age clad in silken robes, the young women are here shown forgetting themselves and becoming hysterical at the sight of an uninteresting old man of prosaic mind and austere manners. It is usual to describe man as infatuated by woman's beauty. In the present case, it is women by the hundreds who are infatuated by this old man with neither physical nor mental charm. The only reason given to this strange attraction is the favor shown to him in the form of a benign glance from the Mother. The dynamics are not that of man-woman polarization, rather the cause of attraction is the Mother's grace. It is as if she is causing a whirlpool of beauty around an object of her choice.

Beauty is essentially a subjective experience. The most enchanting panorama can look barren and meaningless, even hostile, to a person when he or she is in a state of depression or frustration. Though science has now shown that pleasure centers of the brain can be stimulated electrically or chemically so beauty can be experienced without the aid of any sense object, that means only that the nerves are being agitated at a deeper level. Beauty in itself is not a mere biomolecular agitation. It is a normative notion of the spirit that interprets the quality of what Hans Lukas Teuber calls the "enormous specificity of configuration, chemistry and connection," no matter whether the configuration is caused by a blond in the theater, an electrical twitch or the spill of an old memory in the brain. When all minds turn to the same sight and exclaim, "Isn't it beautiful?" they are all triggered by the same hand, the hand of mother nature who is variously called Umā or *tripurasundari* and who alone provides all with the mind as well as its sense of beauty. That accounts for the beauty-worshipping young women being ravished by the Mother's spell, which in this verse is cast over the morbid figure of an old recluse.

Here the young women are drawn to the old recluse, the old recluse is drawn to the Mother, and the Mother is drawn to the eternal being, *Śiva*. In the previous verse the arrow pointed downward from the spiritual to the mundane, and in this it is on the ascent from the mundane to the spiritual.



Māndnā, *ritual floor drawings. India.*

*Indian wall and floor paintings are art works done exclusively by women who paint free form, using rice paste as their medium. These magical patterns are drawn on a household surface, often the front doorstep, to mark rites of passage, such as birth or marriage. They evoke, in a more domestic and intimate format, the* maṇḍalas *used in meditation and are intended to bless and empower household members.*

## *VERSE FOURTEEN*

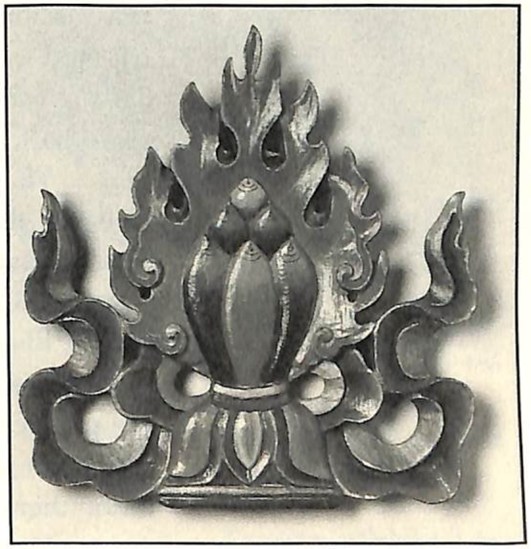
*kṣitau ṣat pañcāśadvi samadhika pañcāśadudake*
*hutāśe dvāṣaṣṭiścaturadhika pañcāśadanile*
*divi dviṣatrimśan manasi ca catuṣaṣṭiriti ye*
*mayūkhā steṣāmapyupari tava pādām bujayugam.*

Fifty-six in earth (*mūlādhāra*), fifty-two in water (*maṇipūra*), sixty-two in fire (*svādhiṣṭhāna*), fifty-four in air (*anāhata*), seventy-two in ether (*viśuddhi*), and sixty-four in mind (*ājña*). These are the rays. Above these are your pair of lotus feet.

The phenomenal world that is created by Brahmā, sustained by Viṣṇu, and reduced to ashes by Rudra is composed of the dust particles gathered from the feet of the Supreme Mother. The anthropomorphic concept of the Creator is given up in this verse in preference to a psychocosmic structure and its corresponding function. The individual aspirant can only proceed from where he or she is located, emotionally and physically, at a given point in time and space. So the description of the grandeur and beauty of the Mother of all beings commences from the base foundation of the psychosomatic system of the person, described here as the earth principle. The quality of earth is smell and that is the most peripheral aesthetic appreciation. For lower animals in search of their prey, smell is very important. The most gross aspect of world manifestation is to be seen in the actual interplay of physical particles directed in accordance with the precise laws of chemistry. This, according to the Tantric concept, is the conjunction of *Śiva* and *Śakti* at the most exterior level as the inseparable twain, the dynamic and its principle. The last four letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, *va*, *śa*, *ṣa* and *sa*, are attributed to this region as the mystical syllables for the creation of its word power. Out of 360 days, this region is allotted a time span of fifty-six days, equally divided between *Śiva* and *Śakti*, with twenty-eight days each.

The next immediate element in the ascending hierarchy of creation is water, which has the quality of taste. This in its turn implies nourishment, as the origin and nurturing of life are in water. The synergic center symbolizing water is the *maṇipūra* or pearl of perfection. In the order of the description of the *cakras*, there is a discrepancy between Śankara's scheme and the traditional yogic scheme. Here the *maṇipūra* is located in the navel plex, which, in the scheme of the yogis, is the third *cakra* from the bottom. Śankara treats it as the second. Fifty-two days are attributed to the *maṇipūra*, which are shared by *Śiva* and *Śakti* with twenty-six days each. The Sanskrit letters assigned for word power in this region are *ba*, *bha*, *ma*, *ya*, *ra*, and *la*.

From the water principle one ascends into the principle of fire, *svādhiṣṭhāna*. In the scheme of meditation presented in this verse of Śankara, one ascends from the *mūlādhāra* base at the end of the spine to *maṇipūra*, the navel plex, and then descends to *svādhiṣṭhāna*, placed at the genitals, in-between the *mūlādhāra* and the *maṇipūra*. In the actual practice for the activation of the center, this is found to be very helpful because the navel plex is to be co-stimulated along with the synergic center at the genital base. *Svādhiṣṭhāna* is the ground of the psyche. In the libidinal scheme the psyche is the most hypersensitive faculty that controls both the physical and mental activities of the individual. All of an individual's locked up urges are in this region. Both hope and anxiety are generated in the



Flame of Wisdom. *Painted wood carving. Tibet. Twentieth century.*

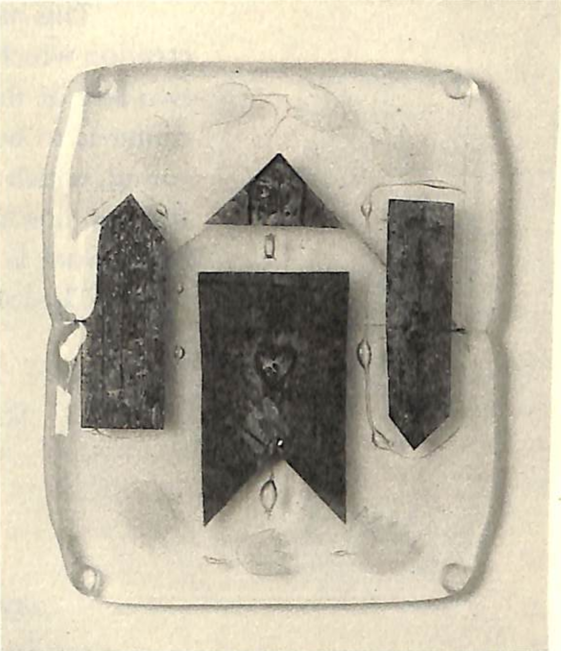
*In the iconography of Greater India (peninsular India as well as the adjoining areas to the north, south and southeast that were in the same cultural orbit), fire is an image that vibrates with many complementary meanings. It is fire that destroys: the ego, our illusions, the world of physical form. It is fire that purifies and levels the ground so new life can appear. And it is the fire of wisdom that fills the enlightened mind.*

*svādhiṣṭhāna.* Thus it is the breeding ground of all motivation. The flames of desire rise from this region and the conceptual visualization of desires is promoted, both as *saṅkalpa* (desirable motives to be actualized) and *vikalpa* (hallucinative imaginations that tend to become pathological). This region is given a total of sixty-two days, of which fifty are assigned to the basic sound principles involved in the creation by word. Four are given to the repetition of *aum,* which is mystically implied in the *mantra haṃsa* that is unconsciously manifesting in respiration. The letters of the alphabet attributed to this region for psychodynamic function are *ḍa, ḍha, ṇa, ta, tha, da, dha, na, pa* and *pha. Svādhiṣṭhāna* and *mūlādhāra* are bracketed in the region of the principle of fire, *agni tattva.*

The next element in ascendance is air and its corresponding synergic center is the *anāhata.* This region is located in the heart plex and implies touch. Love and companionship, which hold the entire world together, are placed at the center of the scheme, just as beauty is centralized in the tree of life of the *Kabbāla. Anāhata* is the unbroken: this also implies the interconnectedness of everything that goes into the manifestation of both the physical and the spiritual world. Between the physical and the spiritual there is no break or chasm, and in the evolutionary chain of manifestation there is also a single unbroken flow of life.

*Ya, ra, la* and *va* are the mystical syllables meditated upon here. They suggest the localizing of interest, positive enjoyment, merger with the state of happiness (both in physical identity and spiritual at-one-ment), and then losing oneself in a state of wonder. The Sanskrit letters assigned for word dynamics are *ka, kha, ga, gha, ṅa, ca, cha, ja, jha, ña, ṭa, ṭha.* The *maṇipūra* and the *anāhata* are bracketed as the region ruled by the sun.

Above this center is the throat plex, *viśuddhi.* It is the region of the ether or *ākāśa,* where the most primary vibrations of sound manifest. In the perceptual world, sound is the most effective communicator and its memory potential is the deepest. Unlike the other four elements of earth, water, fire and air, *ākāśa* has no physical substance. Thus it provides the link between the physical and the spiritual. In space travel, to go from the orbit of the earth into the orbit of the moon a change-over period or process is necessary. Like that, to enter from the region of the spirit into the region of the physical world, a certain kind of transformation or transmutation has to take place. To clothe an idea in oral language that can be uttered with phonetics and thus transmitted to another's mind by depos-



The Goddess, *Bob Lucas. Fused glass and copper sheeting. America. 1989.*

*The recognizable heart of the goddess lies at the center of her abstract body, with a triangular head and north-south directional arms. Walking in a circle around the body are the goddess' tulip footprints.*

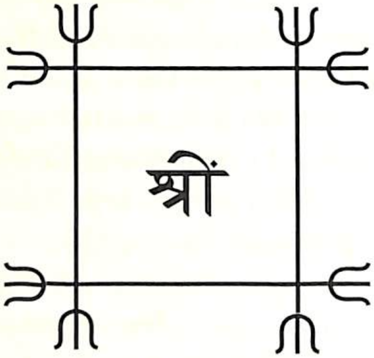
iting the elements of speech into another's hearing system is a very intriquing process. Words change into meaning with the sounds of the words being the carriers of deeply affective messages of knowledge. This marks the most central or pivotal point of the physical becoming articulated or of spirit animating the physical.

Meditation in the *viśuddhi,* the throat plex, is done with the mystical syllables *aiṃ* and *hrīṃ*. The fourteen vowels of the Sanskrit language are *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, r, ru, l, e, ai, o, au, am*. The seventy-two days alloted to this center are mainly for word structuring. Vowels are imperative for linking consonants and making words. If consonants are like colors, the vowel is like the artist's medium to relate one color to another. Such pigmentation is common for painting and music. In both, the color element is called *varṇa*. Vowels are called *svara,* which means that which suits one's own pleasure. The number of word units that can be structured by combining two consonants with a vowel is so amazingly large that only a few such possibilities are given, even in the most voluminous dictionary of any language.

When we pass to the *ājña,* we transcend the physical and come to the overseeing mind which is in charge of our wakeful and dream consciousness. The fourteen vowels used for word dynamics in oral expression are used also for structuring reason. We think with words and the interconnection between the *ājña* and the *viśuddhi* is so close that some people cannot think without physically expressing their thoughts. Thinking is a kind of talking within one's mind. As talking is done with the tongue, the organ of speech, ideas are relayed in the form of commands to organs of action. Thus, the incoming sensory affectivity (the afferents) is responded to with actions generated through the motor system. The order of the intensification of action is from the mouth to hands, to feet, to excretory organs and to the genitals. All these are presided over by the moon which is suggestive of the quality of reflection or mirroring that is happening in the mind. The presentative and the representative experiences are so intensely intermingled that one cannot say which is actual and which is projected. Both in the actualization of a gestalt and the affective response given to it, a highly complicated and instantaneous function is required.

This ascending hierarchy ultimately takes one to the source of all creation which is none other than the particles of dust located between the two feet of the Supreme Mother. The radiation of the beams from that center is to be understood both as a dazzling light as well as a flaming sound, which on one side shines forth as the cosmos and, on the other, as the psychosomatic function within the finite organism of each sentient being. Such is the grand scheme of beauty that is depicted in this verse.

The following *yantra* is to be meditated upon with the *mantra śrīṃ*.



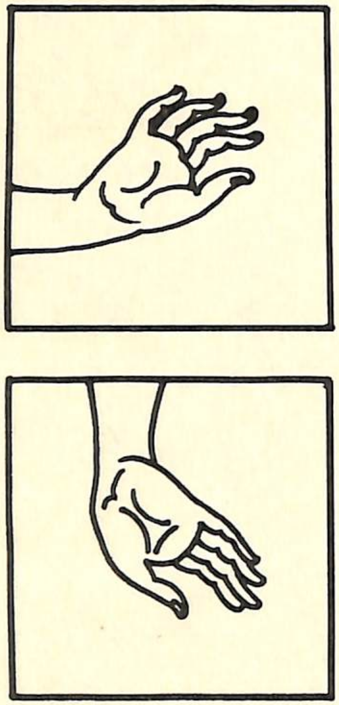
*śrīṃ*

# *VERSE FIFTEEN*

*śaraj jyotsnā śubhrāṃ śaśiyuta jaṭā jūṭa makuṭām*
*vara trāsa trāṇa sphaṭika ghuṭikā pustaka karām;*
*sakṛn na tvāṃ natvā katham iva satāṃ saṃnida dhate*
*madhu kṣīra drākṣā madhurima dhurīṇā bhaṇitayah*

Your bright light being the sheen of the autumnal moon,
the topknot of your hair is decorated with the lunar crescent.
Your hands show the gestures of *varadam* (boon-giving blessings)
and *trāṇanam* (asssurance or refuge). In one hand you hold
*sphaṭika ghuṭika* (rosary of crystal beads) and in the other *pustaka*
(a book). If you are even worshipped by good people,
how can they miss coming into your presence and enjoying
the nectarine sweetness of the melody of your words,
which are like honey, milk and grapes?

In between the immanent unconscious and the transcendent superconscious realms of the spirit, humankind lives in the alternating consciousness of transactions and dreams. The golden thread of value or interest that remains unbroken in the continuous figure-of-eight movement of the witnessing self is *ānanda*, unalloyed bliss. The microscopic creativity presided over by the *kuṇḍalinī* and the macrocosmic creativity presided over by *tripurasundari* are described in verse fourteen as counter-



Mudrās. *Specific hand configurations are used in traditional Indian art and dance to designate certain states of awareness, most commonly blessings and refuge.*

parts of the same scheme. Both are aspects of the archetypal Mother. Like the four limbs of *brahman* given in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the archetypal Mother also has four aspects, Kāli, Durgā, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmi. Structurally Kāli and Durgā represent, respectively, the vertical minus and vertical plus poles. Such aspects can also be termed the alpha and the omega. Similarly, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmi respectively mark the minus and plus poles of the horizontal axis. Such four-fold divisions do not in any way destroy the unity of the archetypal Mother. Without being identified as belonging to any one of the four poles, she can fill both the vertical and the horizontal. The function of *tripurasundari* and the *kuṇḍalinī* can be correctly understood only when the verticality of creation implied in both aspects is placed in one and the same scheme. This gives us the secret of humans functioning on earth as co-creators with the supreme manifestor of the world. When the sun and moon illuminate the panorama of the world, the colorful beauty of such vistas is registered in the eyes of people. God creates the world and men and women comprehend its representative value. Thus, if God is the poet, man is his critic. The beauty that is generated by God is seen, appreciated and lived by humankind.

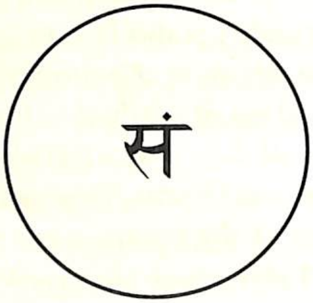
In the *Saundaryalaharī*, God is not a masculine "he" but a "She" with a capital S. The structural implications of the grand Creatrice cannot be fully visualized unless the seeker shares with her the same purpose and function. It is to initiate the meditator into the secret of the Supreme Mother's purpose and function that her four-fold representations are here given as Kāli and Durgā, Sarasvatī and Lakṣmi. The meditation should begin by placing oneself at the alpha point of vertical ascent. This is like sitting in pitch darkness where there is nothing to guide one other than an unknown hand offering refuge. That hand quells our fear. In absolute faith and total trust, we surrender and give ourselves over to follow the ascending steps within the matrix of immance. We remain steeped in the deep sleep state of the psyche in which the unconscious is guarding the secret of both life and death. Each day a little is released from the unconscious and promoted to conscious manifestation, either as the subjective visualization of dreams or as the transactional conversion into a conscious experiential entity that can thereafter be added to the storage of memory. This is the causal aspect of the continuing individuation of the psyche.

The highly secretive mechanism of manifestation can be made a little clearer with an example from nature. The flowering plants in our gardens stand there as if drawn in a picture, but in their secret silence a conspiracy is going on between the descending rays of the sun and the ascending moisture from earth. The salts and minerals from the earth are diluted with water and rise as sap up to the leaves where they are wedded into new configurations through the use of solar energy. Out of that union, new leaves are unfurled and there come, according to the characteristics of each species, flowers of different hues and patterns. If we look at the earthly source of these flowers, we see only dirt. What emerges from that dirt is of incomparable beauty. What is seen in the plant is to be interpolated into one's own system to understand how, from the immance of the dark unconscious, there emerge into experiential minds intuitional ideas that can transport us to the otherwise unapproachable, inaccessible realms of the transcendental.

Durgā is unapproachable. She marks the heighth of transcendence and Kāli is the depth of immanence. The flight of steps that leads from the alpha to the omega is the same as that implied between the cause and its effect. In this daily exercise of ascendence, we pass through the phenomenal stage where dreams and transactions are enacted. It is here that the actuality of life and its virtuality stand face to face as the subject of reflection and the object of transaction. In the subject of reflection, the Creatrice becomes the supreme goddess of aesthetics. She acts as the inspirer and promotes the actualization of the vertical *ānanda* in myrid patterns of horizontally manifesting names and forms. This secret is given in the previous verse in which six sources of the upsurge of creative energy are located and the symbols of word dynamics are given through the allotment of various *mantras.* When what is received by the artist or the poet, or any creator for that matter, by way of inspiration from Sarasvatī , is actualized in the here and now that glorifies Lakṣmi, the goddess of beauty, grace and prosperity. Like the dream and the wakeful, this phenomena is bound to be transient. Like the flowing water of a fountain going back to its own source, what is actualized in the here and now returns to the alpha unless, with the supreme effort of a *tapasya* (sublimation), the essence of the experience is verticalized and one ascends in the sublimity of transcendence.

A synthetic picture of the four-fold aspects of the Creatrice is given in the present verse in which the characteristics of all the four aspects of the archetypal mother are fused into one. The backdrop is the autumnal moonshine which is suggestive of Lakṣmi's aesthetic affinity. In the bringing together of the matted hair and the crescent moon, we can see the fusion of Kāli and Durgā. The gesture which gives assurance of fearlessness is of Durgā and that granting refuge is of Kāli. The rosary for meditation and the book of wisdom come from Sarasvatī. To participate in the supreme glory is suggested by the sweetness of honey, milk and grapes. These triple values are also three eternal gifts attributable to the divine female. Mother is the first teacher of wisdom. In her lips resides the honey of speech. In her breast is the milk of sustenance. In her genitals are the erotic flames of love's wine. Beings are born of her erotics, sustained by her nourishing milk and led by her wisdom. Such is the grand scheme of meditation given for one who wants to be initiated into the secret of the highest beauty of both the immanent and the transcendent.

The following *yantra* is given for meditation with this verse, with the accompanying *mantra* of *saṃ*. Here the Devī is said to be in the form of *kriyā śakti*, the source of poetic talents.



*saṃ*

## *VERSE SIXTEEN*

*kavīndrāṇām cetaḥ kamalavanabālātaparucim*
*bhajante ye santaḥ kati cidaruṇāmeva bhavatīm*
*viriñci preyasyāstaruṇatara śṛṇgāralaharī-*
*gabhīrābhirvāgbhir vidadhati satām rañjanamami*

O Mother, addressed by the wise as Aruṇā (magenta) itself,
your resplendence gladdens the hearts of master poets,
which are like clusters of lotus flowers
bathed in the morning glory of the rising sun.
Those wise ones are lucky to listen to the musical melody
of the Creator's spouse, Sarasvatī,
which is replete with sweet and dignified words of love,
and when they compose poems of exquisite beauty,
they are met with the hearty appreciation of
the connoisseurs of poetry.

The first act of creation begins with a stir in the Self, by which the Self is mirrored in itself as the image of the Self. Out of the formless there arises form. A pebble thrown on the surface of a lake does not stop with a single pulse. Rings of ripples go on receding from the center and soon the lake is patterned with several circles. The Self is never satisfied with the casting of a single image. When images proliferate, the monotony of repetition gives way to atypical formations of unique forms

Sarasvatī, goddess of wisdom. *Carved ivory. India. Twentieth century.*

*Sarasvatī is the manifestation of the Devī who is accepted as the all-pervasive effulgence of knowledge which is at once creative and eternal. Sarasvatī by herself is colorless. But like a prism which gives rise to a spectrum, she mysteriously causes a colorful world of names and forms. Her mist-like veil is fabricated with time and space. In her hands she holds a palm-leaf book, a rosary of letters, a vina and a pen. These represent, respectively, the word of wisdom, the thread of meaning in language, the intuitive melody of music, and the inspired art of poetry.*

adhering to a universal law. Thus the very first stir has in it the beginning of poetry. The Self is the first of all poets and the phenomenal world is the unending poem imagined by countless minds, sung in endless ways, painted and sculpted unceasingly.

The Mother of all beings is also the Mother of all forms, all names and all mediums of expression. She is like a subterranean river, which in Indian mythology is called Sarasvatī. In a previous verse we spoke of the four archetypal versions of the Supreme Mother: Kāli, at the vertical negative, Durgā at the vertical plus, Sarasvatī at the horizontal minus and Lakṣmi at the horizontal plus. In the purest, formless form, she is pure light. The first stir comes by the casting of a shadow. By that, *aditi*, the unbroken, becomes directed into plus and minus, light and darkness.

In Genesis of the Old Testament, creation begins with light, and light becoming separated from darkness. That darkness is the abysmal depth from which every item of creation has to emerge. Emergence is formal. There is nothing more mysterious than a form, the sheer outline of things. The non-dimensional reality emerges into a two-dimensional reality. Primeval form needs no color, no shade, no mass. The sun can be represented on a small bit of paper by drawing a plain circle. A simple line drawing of an ant can be blown up to a size bigger than an elephant and yet the recognition of the form is instantaneous. The line of demarcation is the scantiest manipulation of non-light in the all-filling light. When once a boundary is drawn, a specific form is fixed forever.

Imagery conditions consciousness, and conditioning is made intense when it colors the vision. Color creates deep emotional agitation. Hence it is called *rāgam*. The intensely colored state arises when the color is purple or red. If the deepest of blue is at the alpha, scarlet red is at the omega. Kāli is therefore described as black or intensely blue, and Durgā is scarlet red. We have seen that these respectively mark the alpha and the omega. For the creation of form, the purity of light is to be retained. Therefore Sarasvatī at the horizontal minus is conceived to be transparent like a crystal. She is clad in a white raiment. Her positive counterpart is Lakṣmi who is resplendent like a rainbow. Any, or every, color will suit her. Now we have a complete scheme of colors and the archetypal mothers who represent those colors. We are still in the world of forms.

Water lily or lotus.

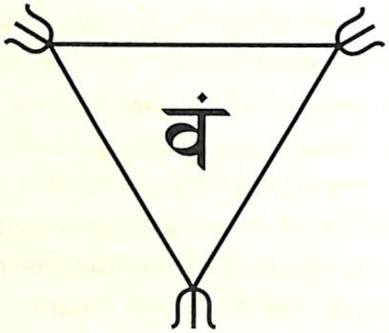
*In the Indian mythological landscape, the lotus flower symbolizes the purity of Being that rises up out of the watery, worldly mud by which it is nourished but never blemished. Floating on the water's surface, the lotus flower opens expansively to the sun and the light of knowledge.*

No stir happens without causing a vibration. *Ākāśa*, identical with the Absolute, is deeply silent unless it is stirred. When it is stirred, vibration emerges as sound, *nāda*. When sound becomes musical, or affective voice, specific pitches are bracketed as a note, a phrase, a composition. That, too, colors consciousness. It is as if the sound has a color. Hence, in Indian music the two major affective musical modes are *varṇa* and *rāga*. The two breasts of Mother Sarasvatī are considered to be the generating sources of the aural and visual expressions of aesthetics. She is the wielder of name and form. It is from the creator that the mediums of both name and form come. The creator is Brahmā and the medium for creation is Sarasvatī. For this reason, Sarasvatī is metaphorically described as the daughter of Brahmā. The Creator cannot create without impregnating the name and form again and again. On that ground, Sarasvatī is the spouse of Brahmā.

The relation between the archetypal Mother, simply described as Devī, and the four specific forms, should be clearly held in mind. These are secondary types mirrored in phenomenal consciousness as the four basic images; they can be treated as the four primary images. The first poet is Brahmā the creator. His four-fold creations are Mahā Kāli, Mahā Sarasvatī, Mahā Durgā and Mahā Lakṣmi. The interaction between Mahā Kāli and Mahā Durgā is to be seen in the vertical parameter of the light and sound of creation. This is quite a demonstrable fact. Draw a thick line in black pigment. Stand at a distance and look at it through the side of a prism. You can visualize the magical transformation of the black pigment into a fascinating magenta color. The entire spectrum is there culminating in red. Mysteriously, the black pigment disappears. Keeping all these secrets at heart, we can dive deep into the creative depth of poetry or visual art. If the starting point is from the archetypal poet Brahmā, the initial stimulation for him comes from the magenta of the Devī. At a more pronounced formal and melodic level, we meet with the subterranean flow of poetic, artistic, and musical inspiration coming from Sarasvatī.

The great poets find themselves positioned in the center of the vertico-horizontal correlation. They know the source of beauty and recognize it as magenta. They wait for the grace of the Mother to be showered on them from the celestial vina of Sarasvatī. These wise ones are like lotuses in a pond, kissed by the morning sun. Their aesthetically colored minds become further enhanced by the graceful beams of the Divine. The lotus unites with the embracing sun, and in exaltation the lotuses sing their ecstatic songs of love. Those songs in turn become like the sun's rays. The flowers in the minds of connoisseurs are waiting to be touched by such immaculate rays of beauty–the beauty of poetry, the beauty of art, and the beauty of love. The outer ripples reach the shore of the lake. Pure *ānanda*, unalloyed bliss, which is the very nature of the Supreme, is brought forth in words, tones, colors, shapes, pitches and timbres for every eye to see and ear to hear. Such is the sharing of the Creatrice with all creatures.

The *mantra vaṃ* is meditated within the following *yantra*.



*vaṃ*

## *VERSE SEVENTEEN*

*savitrībhirvācām śaśimaṇiśilābhaṅgarucibhiḥ*
*vaśinyādyābhistvām saha janani saṅcintayati yaḥ*
*sa kartā kāvyānām bhavati mahatām bhaṅgirucibhiḥ*
*vacobhirvāgdevī vadanakamalā modamadhuraiḥ*

O Mother, those who meditate on you, along with *sāvitris*
(generators of words) and goddesses like Vaśinī,
resplendent like the shimmering pieces of broken moonstone,
become authors of books which are as inspired
as those of great poets, having their words impressed
with the fragrance of the face of beauty
of the goddess of the Word, Sarasvatī

Silence is characteristic of aloneness. Speech characterizes companionship. Where there is an "other" to relate to, the idea of "I am" becomes pronounced. In Sanskrit I-consciousness is termed as *aham*. The other is called *idam*. Transaction is mostly between the "I" and the "other". The word *aham* is constituted of the first letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, *a*, and the last one, *ha*. Both these letters are articulated with the mouth open. *A* is a vowel. *Ha* is a consonant and vowel put together in such a way that

Conch Shell.

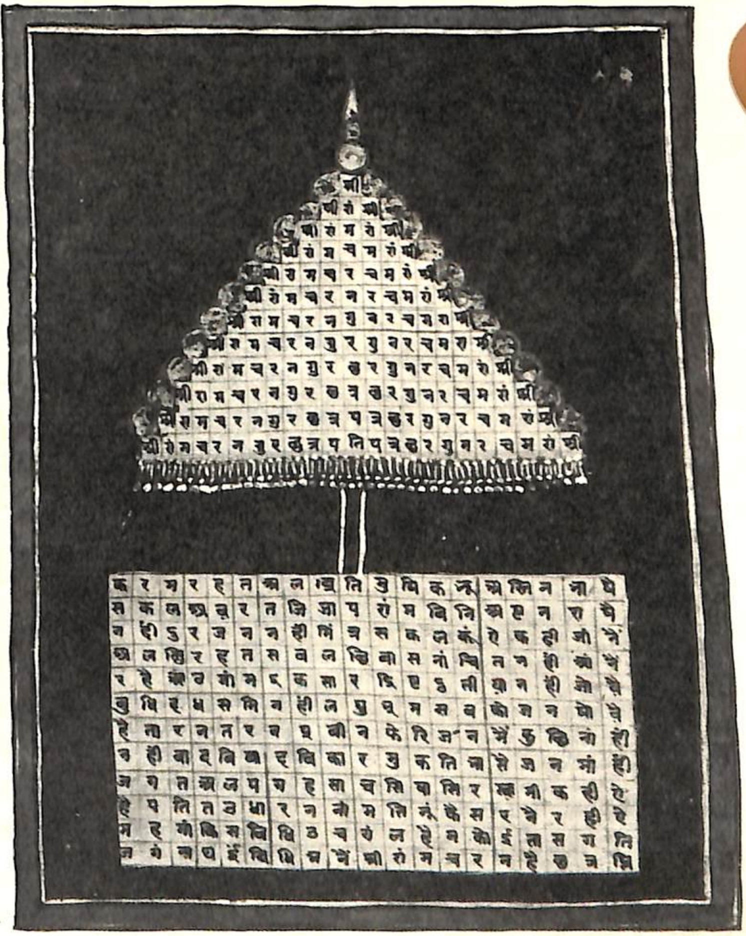
*The conch shell, whose sinuous shape is suggestive of the* yoni *of the goddess, is the instrument blown on to summon disciples to prayer. The sound of the goddess serves to awaken the inner ear of understanding in her devotees.*

the vowel is more emphasized than the consonant. All possible communication happens between the first and the last letters of the alphabet. They are bracketed and closed into a single unit by adding the last of the vowel, *am*. Thus "I" becomes *aham*. To know the exact nature of *a* and *ha*, they should be articulated. *A* is activated or generated in the mouth. To say *ha*, a thrust of energy has to come from the heart to the mouth. *A* is soft; *ha* is more pronounced. For that reason, *a* is called the *Śiva* letter, *śivākṣara* or *śivaśabda*. *Ha* is called the *Śakti* letter, *śaktiākṣara* or *śaktiśabda*. Thus at the very core of one's life the father and mother of the world preside. When a person says *aham* or I, homage is unknowingly paid to the progenitors of the Self. As soon as a child leaves the mother's womb and enters the world, communication begins with a loud primal scream. The arrival of the newborn is announced in the only language that is known to the baby. Even in the very first scream both *a* and *ha* are implied.

The primary cell that is formed in the uterus and that becomes a fetus has in it both the sperm and the ovum. This is the same as the conjunction of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. It is the central nucleus from which both the body and mind of a person evolve, develop and perfect into adulthood. That nucleus is the locus or central point of a whole world of events that take place in the time-space continuum. When that entire world is circled and treated as a region, it is a *maṇḍala*. From the central nucleus, *bindu*, to the outermost periphery, the movement that flows backward and forward, centrifugally and centripetally, is *nāda*, the primary vibration of energy. The multitudinous patterns formed in this region or *maṇḍala* are interconnected, are imbued with a sense of value, and are called *kala*, the art of life.

From the very first day, the very first hour of the child's birth, mother nature assumes the role of teacher and begins programming the baby. Meticulous training is given by mother nature for the child to become fully familiarized with all vowels. It takes some time to be initiated into consonants, yet when once the child is free to manipulate the direction of the vital breath with its tongue so as to pronounce the consonants, it starts picking up words. Long before a word is practiced, the object to which a name is given is watched and a latent power to articulate the name is developed. Here, we arrive at the primary sculpting of words. A word has a phonetic impact. On hearing it, the sound bursts into meaning in the listener's mind. This bursting of sound into a definite, specific meaning is called *sphoṭa*. Sarasvatī, the goddess of language, is described as *sphoṭa darśana kalā kutūhala* or one who is gladdened with the creative art of putting meaning into the aggregate of phonetics.

Eight goddesses are conceived of as sharing this word-generating function. They are Vaśinī, Kāmeśvarī, Modinī, Vimala, Aruṇā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī, Kaulinī. All the sixteen vowels are dealt with by Vaśinī. The five consonants beginning with *ka* are alloted to Kāmeśvarī. The five consonants beginning with *ca* are alloted to Modinī. The five consonants beginning with *ṭa* are alloted to Vimala. The five consonants beginning with *ta* are alloted to Aruṇā. The five consonants beginning with *pa* are alloted to Jāyinī; *ya* and *śa* are alloted to Sarveśvarī. And *ṣa, sa, ha, ḷa* and *kṣa* are alloted to Kaulinī. Now we have all the letters, both the vowels and consonants, pressed into service. *La* and *ḷa* combined with *ha*; *kṣa* is *ka* combined with *sa* and *ha*.



A sacred umbrella. *Ink on paper. Rājasthān, India. Nineteenth century.*

*This umbrella is formed out of the Sanskrit alphabet, whose sounds are the dwelling place of the goddess.*

Although metaphorically we speak of eight goddesses of language structuring all words, this is to be understood as a poetic expression. The actual propitiation of the goddesses is attained through a thoroughgoing study of language in which grammar and logic are brought into full play. Grammar deals with syntax and logic with the correct indication of truth. The meaning of the spoken word goes beyond what is heard. Thus, it has a transcendental purport. The affective quality of the sound, which also enhances the meaning apart from its unique power to reveal, is the musicality of the sound. Its emphasis is on aesthetics. So in the psychodynamics of a word, there is a transcendental and an aesthetic aspect.

The aesthetics are governed by sixteen goddesses of knowledge: Mahā Tripurasundari and Kāmeśvarī (these two are directly connected with Vaśinī); Bhagamālini and Nityaklinna (directly connected with Kāmeśvarī); Bherundi and Vanhivāsinī (directly connected with Modinī); Mahāvidyeśvari and Śivadūti (directly connected with Vimala); Tvarita and Kulasundari (directly connected with Aruṇā); Nitya and Nīlapatāka (directly connected with Jāyinī); Vijaya and Sarvamangala (directly connected with Sarveśvarī); and Jvālāmālinī and Citra (directly connected with Kaulinī). The exoterics of these terms conform to the right requirements of a language. For instance, the vowels governed by Vaśinī are necessary to infuse phonetic energy into sounds. The consonants can be written but cannot be spoken unless a vowel is added. *K* plus *a* becomes *ka*; *k* plus *i* becomes *ki*; *k* plus *u* becomes *ku*. Vaśinī implies the tonal affinity between sounds. If you examine a lexicon of any language, you can see that certain sounds are never put together to make a word. In another language the same pattern can also be seen. There is an inner law which regulates the conjunctions of consonants and of consonants conjoined with vowels. In other words, Vaśinī is not any person but the principle of conjoining sounds. The need for communication arises from the desire to aquire something or to accomplish something. This inner need of language is beautifully brought out in the name, Kāmeśvarī, the goddess of desire. When the right word is rightly spoken, it gladdens the heart of the speaker and the listener. Choosing the right sound to make speech sweet is attributed to the goddess Modinī, which can be translated as "the joyous."

Slang and obsenity are considered a bane in any language, and there is a need to keep language pure and lucid. The governorship of that function is attributed to Vimala, which means that which is absolutely pure. To be effective, language has to be affective. The dawn heralds the coming of the sun. Similarly, a word has to be suggestive of the greater intention of the speaker, which for reasons of modesty, culture, and sophistication, has to remain slightly veiled. This very difficult role is given to Aruṇā, the magenta color of morning. Words are to be pregnant. One word should automatically bring the next word to go with it. That role is given to Jāyinī. Jāyinī is the copulating power of sounds. Sounds are coupled and a new word is born. This world is ruled by words. The overruling word power is attributed to Sarveśvarī, who stands as the supreme goddess. Finally, as speech should have a conclusive impact, there comes Kaulinī who puts a full stop to every sentence.

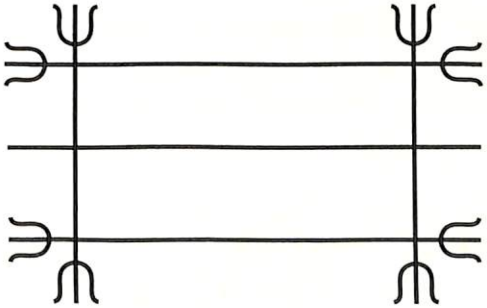
The eight *sāvitris* are only indicated here. Similarly, every name suggested in this *maṇḍala* carries with it a profound semantic and psychological import. The outer periphery of the *maṇḍala* is guarded by *yoginis*.

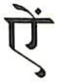
They are: Vidyā and Recaka (connected with Vaśinī); Mocika (connected with Kāmeśvarī); Amṛta (connected with Modinī); Dīpika and Jñāna (connected with Vimala); Āpya (connected with Aruṇā); Vyāpini and Medha (connected with Jāyinī); Vyoma and Siddha (connected with Sarveśvarī); and Lakṣmi (connected with Kaulinī). In this verse we are given a cryptic summarization of the science and art of communication.

A thing is presented to our senses to form a representative image of perception. With our physical eye we look at the presented, and the representative image is perceived by the mental eye. At a still deeper level, the pre-established concept connects itself with the percept for the purpose of identification. The whole function is illuminated by the self-luminous spirit. With perception or seeing there are four hierarchical stages and in language, too, there are four hierarchical stages: the articulated sound, the recognition of a structured word, the comprehension of its meaning, and the homogeneity of the spirit through which communication is made possible. These four are, respectively, called *vaikhari*, *madhyama*, *paśyanti* and *parā*. They are the most concrete, the perceptually concrete, the subtle and the most subtle.

Thus, in language, the universal that is enshrined in every mind is the longing for union. When the *aham*, or I-consciousness, which is the same in two persons, desires union, lovers can express it through a fond embrace and a loveful kiss. Language is performing the same function.

For meditation the relations of the goddesses is used, as well as the following *yantra* with the *mantra aiṃ*.





*aiṃ*

## *VERSE EIGHTEEN*

*tanucchāyābhiste taruṇataraṇi śri saraṇibhiḥ*
*divam sarvām urvīm aruṇimanimagnām smarati yaḥ*
*bhavantyasya trasyadvana hariṇa śālīnanayanāḥ*
*sahorvaśyā vaśyāḥ kati kati na gīrvāṇagaṇikāḥ*

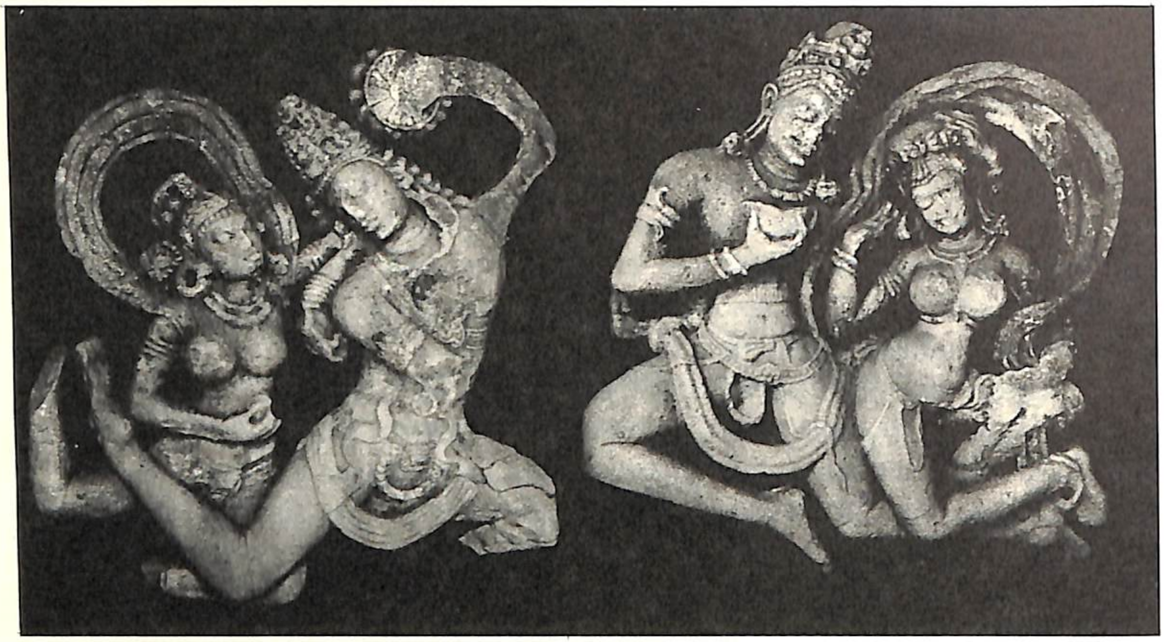
The radiant beauty of your delicate body submerging the sky,
and the whole world bathed in the sheer magenta glory of dawn:
he who is able to contemplate thus wins over maids
with startled, gentle, wild deer eyes, together with Urvaśi
and how many, many other such celestial damsels!

The union of heaven and earth is universally seen in the embrace of the earth by the sun or the moon. The earth is the alpha, the denominator factor, and the sun is the omega or numerator factor. In the vertical axis that marks the parameter of these two extreme poles, there are the descending rays from heaven in the form of light, responded to by the generation of life on earth. The sun is sometimes looked upon as the awakener of the earth, going from east to west and bringing the radiant magenta of dawn. On seeing the first blush of the orient skies, birds begin to sing, flowers open, bees come up out of their hives, and all living beings wake to the day's program. To wake from sleep means to open one's eyes. This opening of the eyes is symbolic: from inertial darkness the soul is emerging into illuminated action. Just as the sun fills the entire sky and the earth with the morning light, the soul which rises in the firmament of consciousness as a grand light fills both the mind and body with its brilliance. Thus the cosmic phenomena of the physical dawn results in the psychic awakening of all sentient beings.

Upon waking a person is attracted to everything beautiful. The experience of beauty brings with it the desire to possess that beauty, or at least to relate with it. Such desires and consequent reactions transform the mood of a person. Of all moods, the brightest, most enjoyable and dynamic one is the arousal of one's erotics, *sṛṅgāra*. In *sṛṅgāra* bipolarity is essential. Although bipolarity can happen between any two persons, it usually occurs between the male and female of the same species. In the erotic longing for each other, people undergo great changes. Love is like an alchemy. Giving oneself to the other as much as possible also entails receiving the other into oneself so that the angularities of each person's ego can be effaced. The male and female of each species are so made that they can feel that they have become one in a fond embrace. Through a process of exosmosis and endomosis, each becomes like the other.

In this kind of coupling, many hindrances come. One is an instinctive fear of losing oneself and being destroyed by the domination of the counterpart. It is allegorically alluded to in this verse as the frightened deer, which is looking hither and thither with its wild eyes, filled both with curiosity and fear. Man and woman are intrigued to know each other and yet are apprehensive of the traps laid within the other. Each wants to possess the other but looks for a way to escape.

To make oneself acceptable to the other, men and women of the human species make themselves attractive in a number of ways. While the vulgar give attention to their physical charm by painting their faces, putting on fashionable clothes and getting into many exhibitionist ways, the more serious and thoughtful among them try to excel by enriching their personalities to the measure of their moral, intellectual and spiritual abilities. In Jungian psychology, the interplay of *anima* and *animus* is studied in detail. In Bhōjarājā's *Sṛṅgāra Prākāśa* one of the finest theories of



Flying spirits. *Stone sculptures. Temple of Durgā, Aihoḷi. India. Fifth to seventh century.*

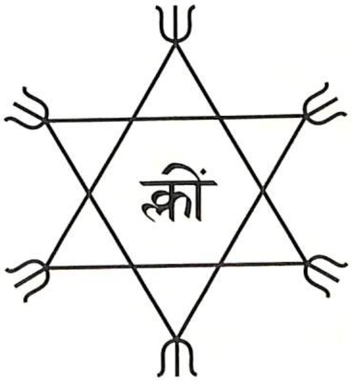
*Durgā is that manifestation of* Śakti *that combines aspects of a warrior goddess and a mother figure. In an important temple dedicated to Durgā, these two spirits, the complementary male and female, are flying in the transparent cosmic sky as her guardians and attendants.*

man-woman dialectics is given. When a man loves an ordinary woman, he wants to be highly valued in her eyes. The reverse is even truer as the female wants to convince her man that she is the most unique woman of rare virtues. In the field of attraction, there are many competitors. Every attraction is closely shadowed by distractions, and the venom of jealousy can easily flow into the minds of a loving couple. Therefore, every lover is on the alert to make his or her acceptance total and fully assured.

In the case of a yogi, he cares little for the admiration of a woman who has physical charm but no spiritual worth. His ambition is to become accepted by the supreme goddess herself. Between lovers the transparency for detecting flaws in each other increases and even the faintest discrepancy is observed with shocking pain. So when the yogi's counterpart is none other than the very goddess of wisdom, he increases his virtues to the highest limits of perfection. The goddess, however, is not a person but the one beauty that permeates both the earth and the heavens, and its source is the same for male and female. To match that brilliance, the yogi attains an expansive vision through intense meditation. When a man is thus filled with the beauty of the supreme source of absolute beauty itself, he becomes sought after by everyone, especially the members of the opposite sex, and even more so when their tastes are refined and cultivated.

There is a special reference to Urvaśi in this verse. Once there was a yogi, Nārāyaṇa by name. When he did penance with great ascetic zeal, Indra, the king of gods, became frightened that Nārāyaṇa, through his excellence, might become greater than him and claim the throne of heaven. Indra conspired to foil the spiritual discipline of Nārāyaṇa and sent a group of celestial beauties to cause erotic agitation in his mind. The celestial maids came before the ascetic and sang and danced. When the yogi opened his eyes, he saw the amusing drama enacted by the girls at the behest of Indra. He wanted to tell Indra that there are values higher than physical charm, and with that intention he struck his thigh with his hand. There sprang out of his thigh a beautiful woman who could not be rivaled by any celestial nymph. He named this girl Urvaśi, being "an attractive one who came from his thigh (*ūruḥ*)." She was asked to go with the celestial nymphs to Indra and tell him that a yogi can make a million beauties like her by a mere wish. The last word of this verse, *gīrvāṇagaṇikāḥ*, is very suggestive. It means a beautiful woman of highly cultured or Sanskritized mind. It is here that the concept of beauty is revalued and restated.

This *yantra* relates to the power bestowed by this meditation on the Devī who is presiding over the *kāmarājakūṭa* in the form of *ichā śakti*. The main *mantra* is *klīṃ*. From the apex of the triangle, going around clockwise, the *mantras* are: *kā, ma, de, vā, ya, namaḥ*, and in the center is *klīṃ*.



का म दे वा य नमः

*kā, ma, de, vā, ya, namaḥ*

*klīṃ*

## *VERSE NINETEEN*

*mukham bindum kṛtvā kucayugamadhastasya tadadho*
*harārdham dhyāyedyo haramahiṣi te manmathakalām*
*sa sadyah samkṣobham nayati vanitā ityatilaghu*
*trilokīmapyāśu bhramayati ravīndustana yugām.*

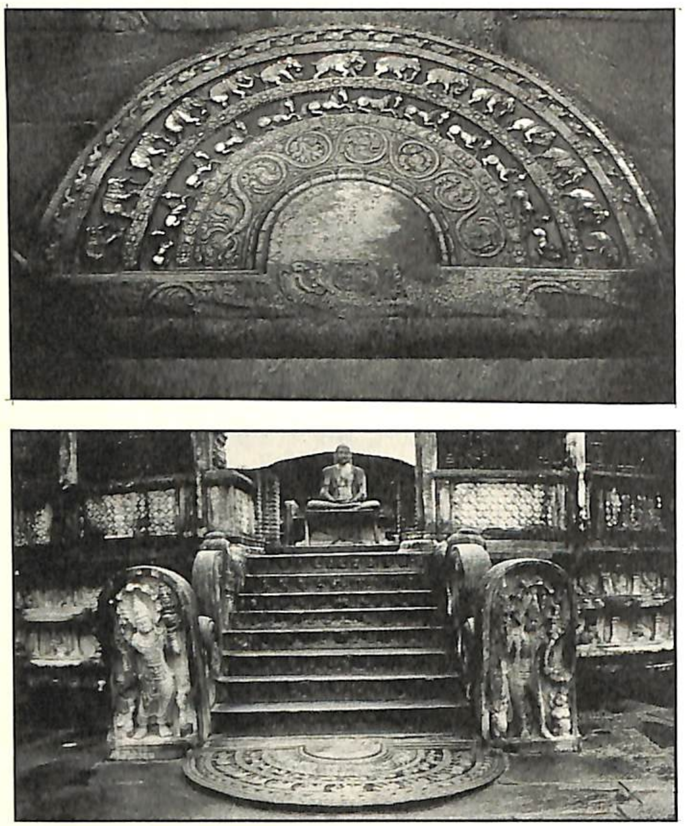
O Consort of Hara, he who envisions your face at the *bindu*,
and below that your two breasts, the sun and the moon,
and the triangle below the sun and moon with the royal seed
(*klīṃ*) of your love-generating dynamics: he stirs
the procreative energy of the female counterpart,
including the Creatrice of the three worlds.

We live in the factual world of here and now, in time and space, recognizing our own body and all the surrounding ones, including the countless billions floating in space. Facts are then interpreted by ideas, which are not like things. Ideas are not sitting here or there. They are born of the mind. Consciousness is not experienced as limited within the body outline. It is at once inside and outside. Ideas are illuminated by the supreme spirit. Thus, in the search for the real we linger at three points:

the factual, the ideal, and the real. Meditation on these three levels is not possible unless the mind is gathered to a unitive focus. Each person recognizes his or her unitive focus as a self-luminous point within, without which no orientation of ideas is possible. Interlacing the factual, the ideal and the real into a single, unitive meditation is done by taking three points in a vertical parameter in which the omega is located at the *ājña*, the synergic center between the two eyebrows. However small the physical body, the entire cosmos is experienced from within the center of one's own individuated consciousness. It is as if the central unitive focus of that person's consciousness is the center of his or her universe.

Meditation commences in the form of a throb or pulsation felt at the *bindu* between the two eyebrows. Every pulsation has in it a rhythmic expansion and contraction. The expansion can be extended to infinity. The contraction from every point of the infinite horizon of consciousness can radially converge to the mathematical point of the *bindu*. This happens in the form of the alternating movement of energy from the *bindu* into all directions and then the reception of the energy back to the central point. This meditation does not involve any perception or vision. It is a state of pure existence and pure being. The Absolute is beyond experience; it is beyond comprehension of any kind. And yet it is, ultimately, the ground of all reality. A reflection of it is mirrored in one's own individuation, and there the *bindu* gains the status of pure *sattva*. *Sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are the triple dynamics of the procreative energy of nature. If these three are looked upon as a triangle, the apex of that triangle is *sattva*. That operates from the *bindu* in the *ājña*, the unitive center between the eyebrows. In this meditation, after sitting for awhile in the *sattva* aspect of nature, the searching mind is empowered with the *mantra klīṃ*, which is a seed *mantra*. It is called *kāma rāja bīja*, the seed of royal desire. The desire here is to unravel the field of ideas and the field of acts from which the fecundity of creation arises and manifests into the multi-million beings of this world.

After gaining a stable ground in the *ājña*, the meditation moves down to the *anāhata*, the heart plex. On either side of the heart plex are seen, like the two breasts of the Supreme Creatrice, the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon are the symbols, respectively, of presentative objects and representative ideas. Here, the central *bindu* located in the *anāhata* is understood as having an oscillation between the seer and the seen. The two modes of procreative energy operating at this level are *sattva* and *tamas*. This is a



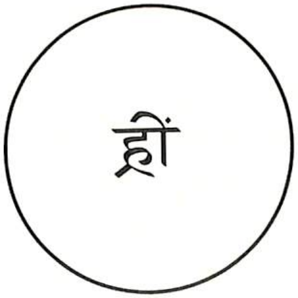
Stūpa entrance and doorstep. *Polannāruva, Sri Lanka.*

*Like earlier, more archaic monuments, Buddhist structures recreated the spiritual universe in miniature.* Stūpas *were built to house relics, and around the center core that held the sacred object the building was constructed as an architectural* maṇḍala. *By walking through and worshipping at the* stūpa, *the devotee participates in universal patterns and relationships. The center of the* stūpa *is symbolic of the* bindu *or locus of consciousness. Moving outward are various walls representative of different levels of awareness. At each of the four cardinal points there are open gates. In this particular* stūpa *from Polannāruva, the statue of the Buddha, or enlightened one, occupies the center position. Guarding the main entrance are two* yakshās, *forest nature spirits, who designate the sublimated vital urge that is now in reverence to the transcendant Buddha-mind. The stone half-moon doorstep also displays stages of awareness in visual form with varying flora and fauna. At the outer edge is the swan, symbol of the life-giving breath and its inward-outward pulse:* haṁsa. *And at the very center is the empty space of* śūnyatā, *the potent and dynamic void that gives birth to all manifestations.*

binary system with factual objects and the registry of their affective impact. The sun stands for the fact that is perceived or experienced, while the moon stands for the impression of what is perceived or experienced and then converted into a concrete idea for storage in memory. *Sattva* illuminates and *tamas* stabilizes or freezes. Here light and shadow, the real and the unreal, come together and blend into experience. A meditation at this level enables the meditator to discern between the true and the untrue, fact and fiction, values that are transient and those that are perennial. Again the *mantra* meditated on is *klīṃ* (*kāma rāja bīja*). Physical nourishment is symbolized by the sun and emotional nourishment by the moon. The transactional, physical reality provides us with tangibility. The cherished memory of that experience gives it a long time span as it is deposited as a memory of the past and then recalled into the present to give a dynamic thrust for a repeated experience in the future. This meditation enables one to unravel the secrets of the *elan vital*, the ongoing actualization of the libidinal energy which one experiences in everyday life as the continuous train of attraction and repulsion. It also helps to repair the damage done to one's own psyche, through lack of insight, and it re-structures and re-harmonizes the psyche so that it becomes rectified of its pathological repression and consequential psychosis.

The meditator next goes below the *anāhata.* A mystical triangle is conceived with its base connecting the *mūlādhāra* and the *maṇipūra* with the apex at the *svādhiṣṭhāna.* This is a difficult form of meditation because here one leaves both the physical body (*sthūla*, or gross) and the subtle body (*sūkṣma*) and enters into the causal body (*kāraṇa*). This is the most subtle repository, or seed bed, for generating individuation of all sorts. *Sattva* is in the *maṇipūra*, *tamas* in the *mūlādhāra* and *rajas* in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. But these positions are not permanently fixed. Each is chasing the other and each is displaced from its natural location to move into the next. The *bijākṣara klīṃ* cannot be activated with a conscious mind, just as a seed buried in the earth has a functioning and an elaboration which cannot be seen. The meditator has to remain content that the strictly guarded secret of the unconscious will surface. This is seen in the begetting of a child in which both the father and the mother are kept blindfolded. Their only reward is the orgasmic bliss that effaces for a short while all sense of duality. Without any effort on their part, a third factor emerges, the *praja*, the new individual. Thus in the triangle of the *mūlādhāra*, the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and the *maṇipūra*, there is a representation of the father, the mother and the newly generated child. Here one uses one's own body as an experimental tool to understand the creative function of the entire universe. The three *bindus* vertically marked are once again scaled step by step. The meditator mounts from the causal to the ideal where the oscillation happens between the ideal and the factual, and from there to the real where the unconditioned, by its sheer presence, infuses the power to see and know into the conditioned. Thus, when a person is fully instructed, the universe becomes a cosmic woman and he is a cosmic male. It makes no difference whether the meditator is a male or female because no person is completely male or female. Both are in either.

The *mantra hrīṃ* is meditated upon in a circle *yantra* for this verse.



*hrīṃ*

## *VERSE TWENTY*

*kirantīmaṅgebhyaḥ kiraṇa nikurumbāmṛtarasam*
*hṛdi tvāmādhatte himakara śilāmūrttim ivayaḥ*
*sa sarpāṇām darpam śamayati śakuntādhipa iva*
*jvarapluṣṭān dṛṣṭyā sukhayati sudhādhāra sirayā*

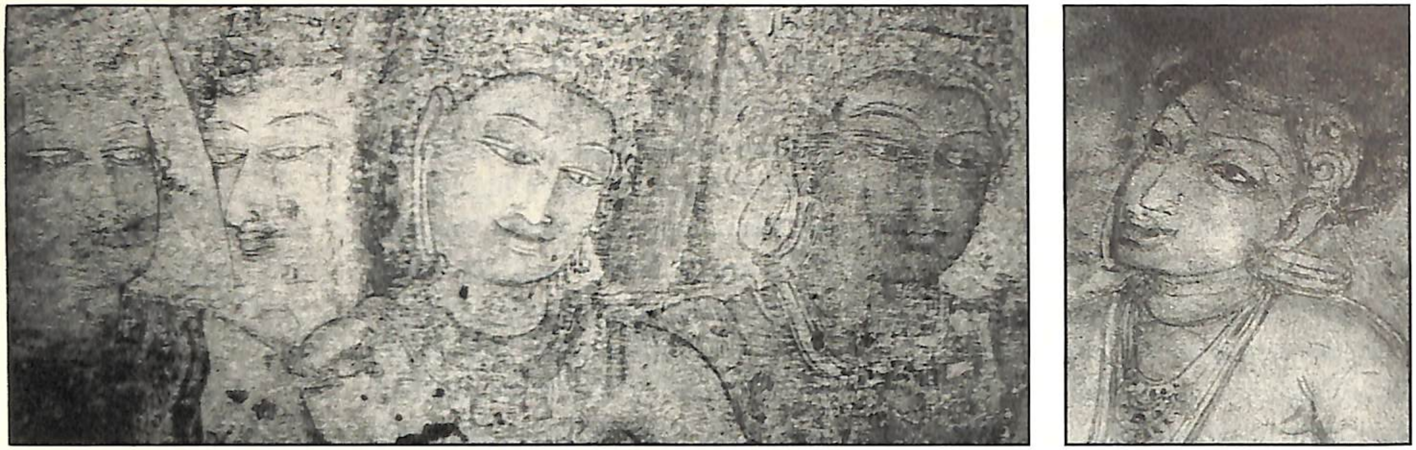
The nectar-like reflective rays that shower from your limbs,
when envisioned in the heart of an aspirant
as an image of cool moonstone: such a person,
having become a recipient of psychic energy,
which is like ambrosia, pacifies the pride of snakes and
quells by a mere glance the fever of those who suffer from it.

The numenon and the phenomenon are so unitively placed that the one is known by the other. The union of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is one such placement. The self-luminous light of the numenon is reflected by the phenomenal in all directions with all variegated colors and significance. This is like the streaming forth of ambrosial rays from the limbs of the Supreme Creatrice. The transcendental lord is *niravayavi*, one without limbs, and the creatrice is *sa avayavi*, one with the entire universe for limbs.

The meditating yogi is a person who seats himself in absolute composure before the deity in the sanctum of his own heart. The worshipper who is propitiating the deity cannot, however, relate to the incomprehensible, limbless, transcendent Absolute. So, instead, he goes inward and imperientially identifies with the spirit that animates his own self from the tip of his toes to the crown of his head. In every capillary of his nervous system he can feel the flow of the ambrosial energy of the life-giving grace of the divine in the form of *prāṇa*. After envisioning the full play of *prāṇa* within himself, the propitiator projects it on the idol before him. The stone or metallic image before the worshipper is no longer an inert mass; the worshipper's own phenomenal existence has been introjected, *prāṇapratiṣṭha*, into the image. That serves as a window through which to look into the marvel of the Absolute, which is at once *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Like two triangles, one with its apex pointing towards earth and the other with its apex pointing towards heaven, they are interlaced. A region exists within the interlacing of the triangles: in that *maṇḍala*, the propitiator places himself. The five-fold elemental principles and the four-fold principles of divine creativity encompass his being.

Three positions are taken, one at the crown of the head, the second in the *anāhata*, and the third in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The worshipper meditates on *aum*, or *praṇava*, in the *sahaśrāra*. It is to be filled with the showering beams of the world-generating energy, out of which he can distill, like a swan, *haṁsa*, the transcendental of the *turīya*, which remains in the remote ground as the eternal being. In contradistinction, he will also see the primeval cause surging up in all possible imaginings of *taijasa* and becoming the concrete reality of the transactional world. Thus, through sympathy and bipolarity, the propitiator diffuses his ego and spreads out into the entirety of the phenomenal and the numenon. Here the yogi is in *samādhi*. His psychic energy is infused with the creative gleam of the very spirit that causes the world to manifest.

Next the yogi transports the locus of concentration to the *anāhata* and meditates on the mystical syllables *kṣa pa*. This is a meditation which prepares the yogi's self to be totally consumed by his intense devotion. His own libidinal energy is roused only to tame and sublimate it. Instead of allowing the libidinal energy to dissipate and escape the organism through *apāna*, the downward-going vital energy, the yogi directs it upward. The emotionally charged libidinal energy raises its hood like a captive cobra. Psychically it is interlinked with the eagle-like intelligence, *buddhi*, which is super-animated with the pure light of the Absolute. The progenitive energy becomes transformed into *ojas*,



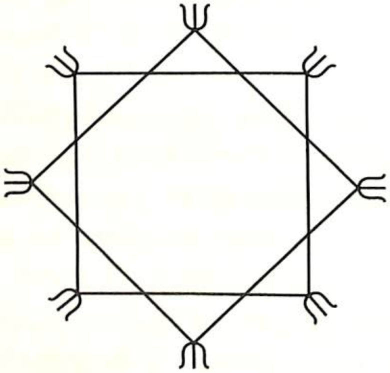
Cave fresco. *Sīgiriya, Sri Lanka. Ca. fifth century.*

*In these noble women that are painted in a cave at Sīgiriya, we see that same "compassionate glance of the goddess that grants the devotee a state of oneness." The full image of these frescoes is of the women walking northward (in the direction of an important Buddhist shrine), strewing flowers from baskets that they are carrying, presumably paying homage to the Buddha.*

yogic radiance. Here the propitiator places his residual ego that is to be burned in the *svādhiṣṭhāna* into the flames of his intense love for the divine and meditates on the mystic syllables of consummation, *svāhā*.

When a piece of iron is magnetized, it begins to act as a magnet. Even so, the yogi becomes a crucible of alchemy and by his sheer glance can pacify the tormenting libidinal urges in others. Instead of gross passion for sexual union, there comes a love for the sublime. This quells the feverishness of competitive life. There is no longer any rivalry or fear. The yogi becomes a haven of peace for others, and in him is seen the meaning of every quest and the answer to every problem. A rare blessedness comes to stay. *Aum kṣapa svāhā.*

The *yantra* for meditation employs three *mantras*, *aum*, *kṣip*, *svāhā*, within two squares, one placed over the other at a forty-five degree rotation.

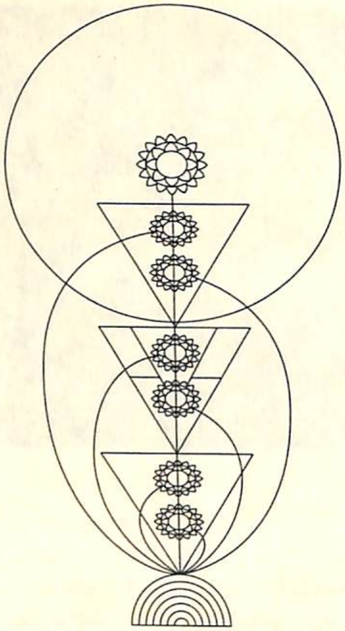


# *VERSE TWENTY-ONE*

*taṭillekhātanvīm tapanaśaśivaiśvānara mayīm*
*niṣaṇṇām ṣaṇṇām apiupari kamalānāmtavakalām*
*mahāpadmāṭavyām mṛditamalamāyena manasā*
*mahāntaḥ paśyanto dadhati paramāhlāda laharīm*

O Supreme Mother, seated in the great lotus
of countless petals, situated above the six lotuses,
your resplendence is like a lightning streak of the
sun, moon and fire. When your manifestation,
comprised of the *bindu*, *nāda* and *kalā*, and
culminating in your union with the Lord, is seen
by those blessed ones who are free of the taint of *māyā*,
the confusing confection of the real and the unreal,
is immersed in the billowing upsurge of ultimate joy.

In man there is a moth, a lotus flower, and a yogi, each wanting to be united with light. To enter the kingdom of God every person is to be born twice. The first birth is the responsibility of nature, which revels in the game of hide and seek. Truth and untruth are mixed in equal quantities and man is held a captive of deceptive appearances. Until he becomes fully disciplined, he very often mistakes the unreal for the real and the real for the unreal. This aspect of *māyā* is negative when contrasted with the neutral as-



Cakras. *Computer drawing. Andrew Larkin.*

*A geometric scheme of the bodily loci of energy and their various interrelationships.*

pect of the Absolute, yet it is not altogether negative because the power and glory of the Absolute reside in this world-generating process. Where Śankara calls it *māyā*, Rāmānuja calls it *līla vibhūti*, the sportive power of God. In the *Bhagavad Gīta* it is aptly termed as the *yogamāyā* of the lord. In Narayana Guru's *Daiva Daśakam*, God is described as the illusion of phenomenality, the magician who deludes, the rejoicer of the magical element of illusion, and the compassionate one who ultimately releases beings from the snare of *māyā*. That final release comes at the farthest end of the second birth of man and woman.

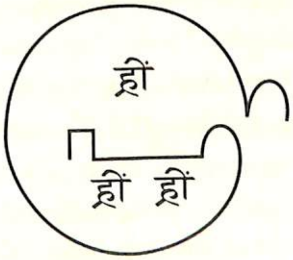
The *jīva*, the fully born individual, receives the baptism of fire in the two lower synergic centers, the *mūlādhāra* and the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The path from the alpha to the omega is barred by six gates through which one has to pass before being allowed to reach the blessing of the omega. From the *kulakuṇḍa*, the hidden pit from which the seed of life emerges, the search is guided by fire to the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. This is the fire of alchemy to which the compulsiveness of blind nature is exposed for purificatory discipline. In the lowest *cakra*, the *mūlādhāra*, the seeker is even ignorant of what he seeks and how he is led, because this is a period where nature herself is equipping the individual and giving indirect instruction to set a goal for life. In the next *cakra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, all the pangs of adolescence and puberty are to be lived. A baptism of fire is appropriate at this age. All the endocrine glands swing into full force in the prime of youth. Then fire hands over its responsibility to the sun, and the love for knowledge lifts the soul; for awhile the passions of the heart lend wings for each person to soar high. The heart is filled with the convictions of higher ideals and a need for declaring one's adulthood arises. Words come as liberators. From there on, the guidance is in the hands of the moon. That is the passage from *viśuddhi* to *ājña*.

This is the general scheme. However, in most people both the search and its attainments remain at a superficial level. Only one among a thousand, once in a thousand years, realizes that the path from his *mūlādhāra* to the *ājña* is really blocked. What his peers take is only a shadow path of conventional culture and the sophistication of worldly search. The sifting of truth from untruth, termed by the wise as *nityānitya viveka*, the exercising of discrimination betweeen transient and perennial values, is taken seriously only by a rare aspirant. All persons born of flesh are susceptible to the snares of the flesh. The discrete person differentiates love from attachment, anger from detachment, and the desirable from hedonistic desires. In this person's life the battle of the spirit commences at a young age. He or she sees the value affectivity projected by the senses on external objects and clearly perceives the deceptive imagination inlaid in such projections. As the aspirant gains maturity, he also learns that all gratifications have cumulative effects. He starts recognizing, in his infatuations and cleavings, dark compulsiveness created by previous conditionings. No meditation is valid until and unless all colorations are decolored and all conditionings deconditioned. The fiery flames of biologic urges cannot shake themselves of nature's dictates. That is why the aspiring novice of yoga brings all the three levels of his or her subliminal life into the clear light of the sun.

The first of these subliminal aspects is the seeded mind of the past, which contains the *vāsanās* or nascent memories that are seeking actualization. The second aspect is the attraction-repulsion interaction going on in the present moment with environmental promptings. The third is a goal orientation which sets the mind moving in specified directions. Every moment is a moment for correction, for the replenishing of spiritual stamina, and for the revision of goals. At the more advanced level, the yogi applies wisdom gained through self-discipline. His words and actions now bear witness to his inner vigilance. He is like the supreme lotus, thousand-petalled, which has in it the cream of humankind's entire culture.

It is accepted that for the final stage one has to wait. It is a leap possible only through grace. Fire, sun, and moon have successively been conducting the yogi to the sublime heights where the spirit transcends *bindu*, *nāda*, and *kalā*. Then one meets with the unalloyed bliss in which the numenon cannot be differentiated from the phenomenon. What was previously seen as a slow conduction from fire to sun, sun to the moon is now seen like an electrical charge, the flash of lightning comprised of the essence of the moon, sun and fire. Here the seeker ultimately gains the full status of the seer. The surging of the billowy waves of supreme joy washes away all sense of duality.

The *mantra hrīṃ* is placed within the following *yantra* for meditation.



*hrīṃ*

## *VERSE TWENTY-TWO*

*Bhavāni tvam dāse mayi vitara dṛṣṭim sakaruṇām*
*iti stotum vāñchan kathayati bhavāni tvamiti yaḥ*
*tadaiva tvam tasmai diśasi nijasāyujjyapadavīm*
*mukunda brahmendra sphuṭa makuṭa nīrājita padām*

O Bhavāni, please give this slave a compassionate glance.
When one desiring to praise you utters the words,
"You, O Lady" (which also means, "May I be you"),
you instantaneously grant him a state of
oneness with you, your feet illuminated by the crests
of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and *Śiva*, who offer to you *nīrājana*,
the fire-waving ceremony, with their prostrations.

Like a wave emerging from water, we also assume the role of an individual being by rising out of the vast expanse of the infinite. After attaining its peak, the wave declines and merges back into water. Though at no stage is the wave separated from water, it seems to have a personality of its own. It acts as a single unit yet is never outside the expanse of water, and the wave cannot go beyond the bounds of the ocean. In spite of the reality of the wave's oneness with the watery expanse, there is a momentary forgetfulness of the real as a result of assuming the consciousness, "I am the wave." Someone has to say, "No, you are water through and through." This is the gist of the great dictum of the Upaniṣads, *"tat tvam asi* (You are That)." The present verse directs the meditator to the discipline of becoming totally united with the whole and leaving nothing of the subject or object outside the whole with which he or she has to identify *in toto.*

All actions, including meditation, are goal oriented. Perceiving a goal, placing it at a distance in time, choosing a path to attain it, and moving in that direction, are all to be visualized as in a strategic attack. A field is chosen before the commencement of the march and progressive instructions are sought and given. Instruction is a language. By arranging our thoughts in a coherent manner, action then follows in accord with proper logistics. The word command that is given from moment to moment to enable you to walk the path from where you are to where you want to be is the *mantra.* It is what should dominate the mind at all times. When the driver of an automobile is commanding his machine, the actualization of the *mantra* is done through a series of ritualistic actions. Every thought that passes through his mind in connection with the operation of the machine becomes instanteously actualized. There is an intrinsic relationship between the word and the mechanical device. The device is *yantra. Mantra* gives the command and *yantra* carries it out. Both are employed as a part of a long-term or short-term achievement program. The whole program is a *tantra.*

The long-term program of a person who has emerged from the infinitude of time and space is to merge back into that infinitude. Thus, one's entire life program is a *tantra,* the person's mind-body equipment is a *yantra,* and the person's education is a *mantra.* A good workman should know his tools. In our case, the tool and its operator are not two. It is a self-governing machine with a self-programmed assignment. However, the psychophysical device has in it a physical mass animated by spiritual, purposive illumination. These two aspects come from opposite sides, as it were, and are so interlaced that no single part can be considered entirely physical or entirely spiritual.

For the purpose of a proto-linguistic understanding, the inlaid scheme of a person functioning within a cosmic system is given as a *śrīcakra.* The bracketing of the whole process is marked by a square with four entrances or exits, one on each side. Within that are three circles. In the interior of the circular field, five triangles are drawn. Interpenetrating these triangles, four other triangles are drawn from the opposite side. A central locus is marked in the middlemost triangle. That is called a *bindu*. The first five triangles stand for the five elements, earth, water, fire, air and ether, or *ākāśa*. The triangles that represent the elements are *śaktitattvas*. The four triangles that are interlocked with them represent the supreme spirit, the over-seeing consciousness, word-knowledge, and the principle of phenomenality and are called the *śivatattvas*. All of these elements are to be understood as constituents of both the macrocosm and the microcosm. The unfoldment of both these cosmos is to be conceived like the opening of a flower. In the scheme of *śrīvidyā*, two fully opened lotus flowers are marked, one within the other.

Although at an intial stage the meditator may need a physical diagram to direct his meditation, at a more advanced stage he should think of himself as the *yantra*, functioning within the cosmos which is a greater *yantra* or device to which he organically belongs. After attuning himself to the device of the cosmos, he familiarizes himself with both the structure and function of the *yantra* which is at his disposal. The first characteristic he notices is that the entire device is placed within a magnetic field. The field is not chaotic, it puts things into order. It is as if there is an overseeing intelligence which desires that things be attracted in such a way that the union of the constituent elements of the universe smoothly carry out the purpose of creation. This most preliminary understanding is recognized as the first divine step. In the context of *śrīvidyā*, it is called *kāmākarṣaṇī* (*kāma* meaning desire and *ākarṣaṇa* attraction). Desirable attraction is poetically conceived and addressed in the feminine gender. Thus it is attributed to the Supreme Mother as one her functions.

There is mutual attraction between electrons, protons and neutrons and the coming together of these particles makes an atom. The huddling together of atoms causes the occurance of molecules. Molecular adherences give shape to bodies. The meditator turns in that direction and sees in the divine plan the concretization of bodies and sees in the Supreme Mother the agent of concretization, worshipping her as *śarīrākarṣiṇī* (*śarīra* meaning body). Although bodies look transient, they are carriers of an eternal program. Nothing is ever destroyed. There is a conservation of energy, in spite of the transformation of matter. Seeing the immortal in the mortal, the eternal in the transient, is the next step of meditation. The Supreme Mother is here worshipped as *amṛtākarṣiṇī* (*amṛta* meaning the immortal).

Nothing is disjunct. The world is not an aggregate of loose particles, but has a universal soul that is holding everything together. This is the item for the next meditation. The supreme is adored here as *ātmākarṣiṇī* (*ātma* meaning the Universal Self within the individual). The perpetuation of creation is through a process of elaboration and condensation. The species of a tree is continued by comprising its essentials into a seed and unfolding them again into a tree. This reduction of every aspect into a seeded state is the next item in meditation. It is attributed to the divine and the Mother is called *bījākarṣiṇī* (*bīja* meaning seed). For the conscious recognition of every part of the scheme, names are devised for each constituent part. The entire world of knowledge is woven out of concepts and there is a grand library of nomenclature from which structured languages come. This leads us to the next meditation when the Supreme Mother is adored as *nāmākarṣiṇī* (*nāma* meaning name).

Each name is suggestive of the class to which it belongs, but a name is useless unless it can be remembered at the right time. Conscious memory makes humankind superior to all other animals, and yet no one knows where memory resides. There is no way to evoke it. It is as if a divine hand is stealthily hiding all experienced impressions, and then the same hand is bringing them back at the most appropriate time in the quickest possible manner. This aspect is meditated upon by meditating on the divine as *smṛtyākarśiṇī* (*smṛti* meaning memory). For the retention of memory there has to be consistency in intelligence. The dull headed are those that have no stamina to keep vigilance. One has to sharpen one's wits and keep inwardly alive and awake. This executive function is attributed to the Mother and she is worshipped as *dhairyākarṣiṇī* (*dhairya* is brightness and consisentency in intelligence).

Burning camphor, *commonly used in worship services in Indian temples.*

*"Your feet are illuminated by the crests of Viṣṇu, Brahmā and* Śiva, *who offer to you* nīrājana *(the fire-waving ceremony) with their prostations." The fire of realization burns our attachments and conditionings to ashes, while the fragrance of the camphor fills the air with the pungent beauty of knowledge.*

Without inner clarity and a well-organized interconnection of memory, the intellect cannot function harmoniously. Experiences are reduced to information bits by the faculty of recall where they are coded and stored as *citta*. Hence the Mother is worshipped as *cittākarṣiṇī*. There are catalysts which can tickle and stimulate. At the grossest level is the olfactory bombardment of the nodules of the nose. Meditation on this element comes in the form of propitiating the Mother as *gandhākarṣiṇī* (*gandha* meaning smell). What is important in smell is the isolation of the essence of a thing. Life in itself is a composition of many essences. Our mind is put into different moods according to the essential character of a given situation. Distilling the essential from the gross is the next stage of meditation, therefore the Mother is worshipped as *rasākarṣiṇī* (*rasa* being the taste or essence of something.)

We live in a world which is gigantically vast, and things are distinguished because of the unique form and bodily shape given to each one. Even by simply examining a few leaves and flowers we can see the marvel of formal design that is shown in the physical creation of the world. This is the next venue of meditation. At this stage the Mother is worshipped as *rūpākarṣiṇī* (*rūpa* meaning form). Nothing convinces us more of the truth of a thing than its tangibility. The most real is that which can be touched and handled. A berry in the hand needs no other testimony to vouchsafe its reality. Unlike the other sense organs, the organ of touch has no limitation. At any part of the body a touch can be received. This is the field for this meditation and the Mother is propitiated as *sparśākarṣiṇī* (*sparśa* meaning touch). For touch contact is needed. The one element that permeates everything is the *ākāśa* or ether in which all bodies are placed. The quality of *ākāśa* is *śabda*, sound. If the eyes enable us to see, with the ear we hear. Communication is mainly through the organ of hearing. This is the next area of meditation and the Mother is propitiated as *śabdākarṣiṇī*.

When everything said so far is located in one agent of orientation, we understand the fuller significance of the individuated self. This agency is better known as I-consciousness, *ahaṃkāra*. The supreme dwells in each person with the unique identity of a separate ego. It is here that we meditate and the Mother is praised as *ahamkārākarṣiṇī* (*ahaṃkāra* meaning the ego). *Ahamkāra* cannot function if there is no faculty of judgement. Everything is to be indicated, interpreted and judged for its validity. This faculty should also be meditated upon. In this context the Mother is called *budhyākarṣiṇī*. Thus we complete one round of the sixteen outer petals of the psycho-cosmological and biological aspects of the *yantra* to which we belong.

Worship and meditation in the inner lotus wrestle with many unforseen perils and hazards. They can be compared to walking on the sharp edge of a razor. After passing through the sixteen meditations of the outer lotus, the mind of the aspiring yogi becomes super sensitive and his or her psychic energy is ready to flow in any direction. Damming, blocking and channeling it can offer more difficulties than riding on an untamed wild horse. All the sharpening of wits achieved through the meditation on the sixteenth petal of the outer lotus presided over by *budhyākarṣiṇī* suddenly turn out to be of no consequence as one enters into the first petal of the inner lotus presided over by the two forces of *tvartia* and *kulasundarī*. The mind starts spinning at a great speed and the meditator becomes restless in his seat. (*Tvarita* itself means that which moves at a great speed.) Libidinal energy cannot be compared with physical energy. Physical energy is flowing through a channel from one location in space to another location. Psychic energy is not a substance. It is a number of interactions that happen, that on one side enable the biological needs to be satisfied and, on the other, are wielded by the volitional power of the ego centered in the persona.

If the aspirant is holding out as his goal an ideal which is at odds with his natural urges, the psychic energy which is booming within him is not flowing in any direction. The likelihood is of a conflagration of energy that tries to burn out the excess by causing agitation in the psyche. The inner operating principle is called *anaṅgamadanā*, which means the bodiless Eros trying to woo the psyche. Here the psyche, as the Greek legend portrays, is a superior and highly dignified female consciousness which does not want to yield like a slave. She demands Eros to stop his hiding tactics and reveal his true face. The actual situation is far from conducive to meditation. The yogi's mind is ready to become infatuated with even the slightest accessibility to beauty of any form. Contrary to expectation, here the female aspect of the psyche tampers with the yogi's higher ideals. Thus he is torn between temptation and restraint. Any energy that is roused during the long term of meditation in this petal has to be properly channelized until the aspirant becomes convinced that he is firm in his seat.

The progression from the field of *anaṅgamadanā* to the next petal is like volunteering for a hazardous labor like that of Hercules. Here the erotics of the aspirant become acute. Because he is dealing with a natural passion, shared and lived by all beings, to resist it is like a man facing a tidal wave and trying to stop it with the palm of his hand. The presiding deity is Nitya of the blue expanse. When a person is hungry, he can be appeased by a square meal, but after four or five hours he is again hungry. If food hunger is like a wolf, sexual hunger is like a tiger. In all the religious literature of mystics, we can read accounts of the acute tempatation with which mystics struggle. In the Christian world, St. Augustine's and St. Loyola's fights with the devil are dramatized in great detail. In Indian *purāṇas* and epics there are many stories of how the best among yogis have failed when they are blinded by infatuation. Theories of sublimation do not hold good. One works out of this dire situation only by turning every iota of his psychic energy to the actualization of his love for the divine. In fact, this is the scheme adopted in all religions. In the Catholic religion all novices, male or female, are the brides of Jesus. He is the Beloved, and He is the only beloved. Any transference of that love to any other person or object is sinful. In the Tantric context, all love and allegiance are to be channeled to the feet of the Supreme Mother. Jehovah, *Yahweh*, is said to be a jealous God. Even so is Devī. Devotion has to become one-pointed.

When one comes victorious out of the turmoil of this fight with erotics, he is welcomed to the third petal, *anaṅgamadanāturā*, presided over by Vijaya, the goddess of victory, and Saravamaṅgala, the goddess of auspiciousness. This is an area of respite. One attains relaxation from the pull of objects and persons outside. But he has to pay the toll for making blockages in the flow of psychic energy. All energy is depleted, and the yogi feels absolutely exhausted. There is even the danger of regression into depression. One cannot do much other than pray for grace and wait for the replenishing of energy to move to the next petal, *anaṅgamālinī*, where the presiding deities are Jvālamālini and Citra. Almost half the way is accomplished, but mounting the heights can make a fall all the more disastrous. A new kind of temptation awaits the yogi here. He becomes supremely attractive. This is like the devil taking Jesus to a pinnacle, showing him the riches of the world and promising them all if only Jesus would pay homage to him. Thomas a Kempis in the *Imitation of Christ* says, "Lord, if I have not fallen, it is not by my virtue but by your grace."

Devotion is further intensified and one gains entry into the next petal presided over by Māha Tripurasundari and Kāmeśvari. This is an area of grace. Love is experienced on all sides with the fragrance of freshly blossomed flowers. This area is of *anaṅgakusuma*, the flowering of love. The goal is still far. Remorse is waiting now, remorse for choosing a path which is unnatural. Suddenly all the labors undergone look like precious time wasted for nothing. Intense frustration comes. It is as if the psyche has gone sour. The mind is filled with many antisocial revenges. Even faith in God looks like an illusion. The presiding deities are Bhagamālini and Nityaklinna, and the area of worship is described as *anaṅgarekhā.*

Now the worshipper comes to the penultimate petal, *anaṅgamekhalā*, which is the last house of torment. Here the deities are demonic. They are Bherunḍī, a vampire-like demiurge, and Vahnivāsiṇi. Many disconcerting visions of the most frightful nature come. One has to walk through the fire of the last temptation. This is the area of amorphous eroticism. After successfully completing this area, one goes into the last petal, *anaṅgavāgiṇī*, presided over by the goddess of *śrīvidyā*, Mahāvidyeśvarī, and the messenger of the lord, Śivadūtī. Ultimately, the psychic energy is channeled to the Mother's divine feet.

With this, the worship of the petals of the inner lotus is completed and one comes into the apex of the inverted triangle. In this device there are fourteen external triangles, ten internal triangles and five points arranged vertically in a descending order to the meditator. The first triangle in which the meditator enters has a *bīja mantra, kṃ*. Once again, the inner tranquility of the yogi is put to a severe test by the presiding deity, Sarvasamkṣobhiṇi, the principle of total agitation. The movement from here on is counterclockwise. The next triangle has the *bīja mantra khṃ*. Here the deity is Sarvavidrāyaṇi, an alchemy which dissolves all agitations. The ego also dissolves away. It is as if one has become an instrument of the Divine. The *bīja mantra* of the next triangle is *gṃ*. Here the deity is Sarvākarṣiṇī. Now there is love for all with no obligatory bondage. There is acceptance from all sides and all are seen in the image of God.

The next triangle has a *bīja mantra* of *ghṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvāhlādinī. Here the yogi rejoices and becomes a great source of joy for all. The *bīja mantra* of the next triangle is *ṅm*. The presiding deity is Sarvasammohinī. From here on, some dangerous areas are to be crossed because many psychic powers are developed and the temptation to do miracles comes. If one is not on one's guard, one may degenerate into a charlatan. The *bīja mantra* of the next triangle is *cṃ* and the presiding deity is Sarvasthambhiṇī. This is a state of becoming immobile. Outward consciousness leaves the body and the mind is drawn into the deep recesses of a spiritual absorption. In the next triangle the *bīja mantra* is *chṃ*. Its presiding deity is Sarvajṛmbhiṇī. Release comes when the mind becomes evanescent. It is as if one has expanded into everything. The sun and moon, the hills and dales, the sky and the ocean are seen as one's own extensions. The topmost triangle has *jṃ* for its *bīja mantra*. The presiding deity is Sarvavaśaṅkarī. All enmity is gone and companionship comes easily with everyone.

The next triangle has *śṃ* for the *bīja mantra* and the deity is Sarvarañjini. All the pairs of opposites leave the mind. There is no distinction between saint and sinner. The next has the *bīja mantra* of *jñṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvonmādini. Now ones gets into God intoxication. To the people of the world, this person may look mad as the yogi does not concede to conventional formalities. He becomes erratic. At such a stage a person usually becomes an *avadhūt*, a homeless mendicant wandering like an orphan in God. The next triangle has the *bīja mantra ṭṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvārthasādhini. Absolute blessedness comes. There is a great sense of fulfillment. The next triangle's *bīja mantra* is *ṭhṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvasampattipūrani. From here onward, the yogi becomes a benefactor. His spiritual coffers are rich, and he can act as a teacher.

The next triangle's *bīja mantra* is *ḍṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvamantramayī. Now the matured and experienced yogi gains the status of a seer. He can formulate psychically dynamic *mantras*. He is a *mantra dṛṣṭa*, the seer of a *mantra*. The *bīja* of the next triangle, the last in the outer group, is *ḍhṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvadvandvakṣayaṅkarī. There is no longer any duality. The devotee and the divine are now mutually exchangeable. From here, one enters into the inner triangle. The *mantra* is *ṇṃ*. The deity is Sarvasiddhipradā. The yogi is now able to perform any act, but he uses his powers only when they are spiritually beneficial to the world. In the same counterclockwise path, one moves to the triangle which has *tṃ* for a *bīja mantra*. The deity is Sarvasampadpradā. There is no need to be fulfilled because everything is there for the mere wishing of it.

The next triangle has the *bīja mantra* of *thṃ*. The deity is Sarvapriyaṅkarī. One starts seeing very clearly that one's *ānanda*, or dear value, is also the dear value of all others. The next *mantra* is *dṃ* and the deity is Sarvamaṅgalakāraṇī, the cause of all auspiciousness. This is an area of absolute peace. The *bīja* of the next triangle is *dhṃ*. The deity is Sarvakāmapradā. The highest possible desire is the desire for total emancipation. The yogi has attained it and he can now be its dispenser. The *bīja* of the next triangle is *nṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvadukhavimocanī, the savior or emancipator from all bonds. Birth and death, pain and pleasure, fame and shame are no longer shackles of the *jīva*. The next *bīja* is *pṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvamṛtyupraśamaṇi. Now the last noose of death is removed. The next *bīja* is *phṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvavighnanivārinī the remover of all hurdles. Here the last remnants of cumulative *karma* are burned off. The *bīja mantra* of the next triangle is *bṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvāngasundarī, the absolutely beautiful. Here the divine and the beautiful are not two. The *bīja* of the next triangle is *bhṃ*. The presiding deity is Sarvasaubhāgyadāyini, the bestower of supreme blessedness. Now one meditates on the crown of the head, *aum*; then in the heart, *śrīṃ*; then in the *ājña*, *aiṃ*; then *hrīṃ* in the *viśuddhi*; and again in the heart with *sauṃ*. With that the worship is brought to a close.

The *mantras* that indicate each state that the aspirant passes through in his progression in the *śrīcakra* are labelled on the illustration, page 109. The numbers on the inner and outer petals and on the triangles correspond to the accompanying list.

## THE MANTRAS

### THE OUTER PETALS:

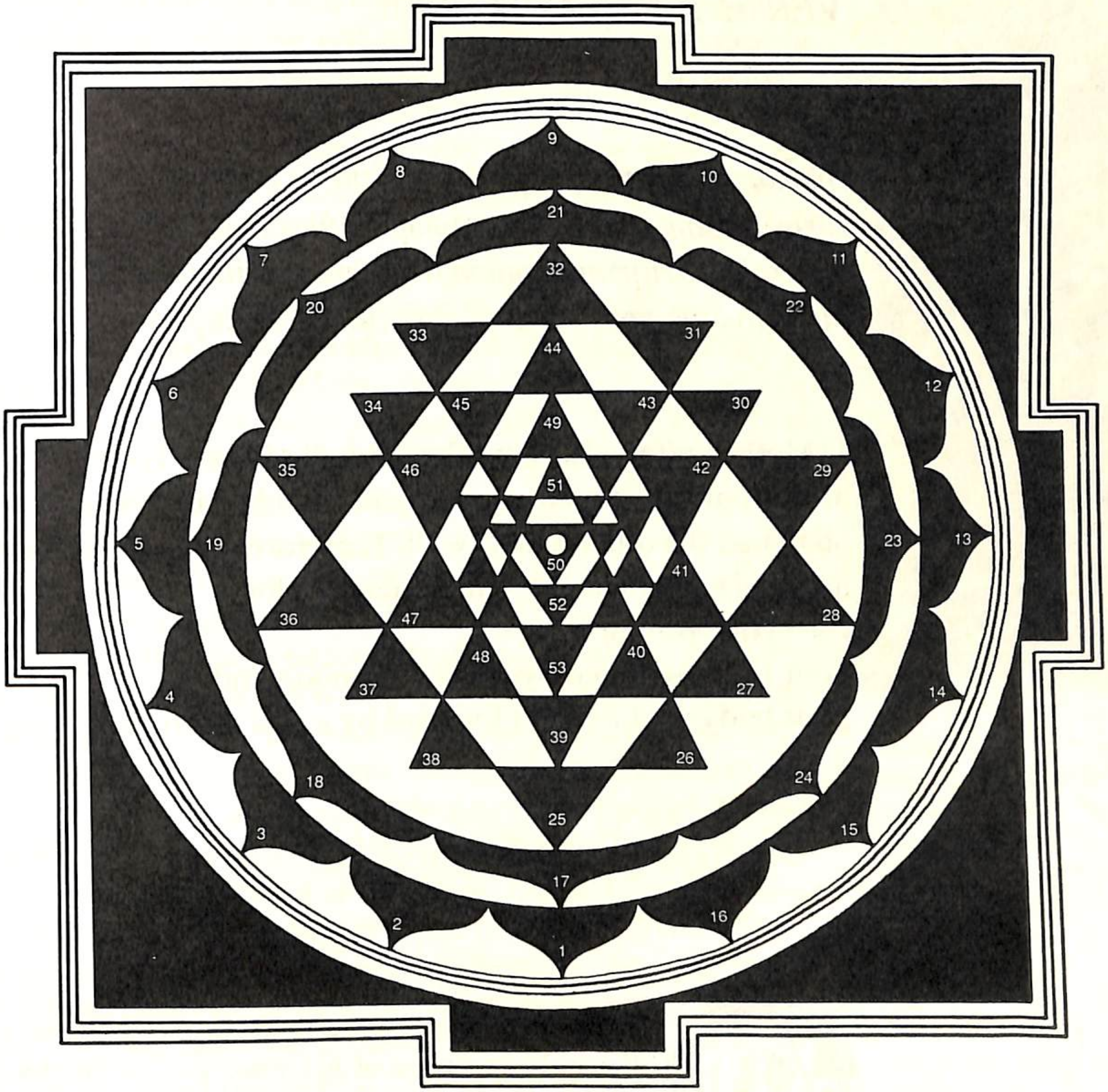
1. *aum kāmākarṣiṇī*
2. *aḥ śarīrākarṣiṇī*
3. *āḥ amṛtākarṣiṇī*
4. *oum ātmākarṣiṇī*
5. *aum bījākarṣiṇī*
6. *aim nāmākarṣiṇī*
7. *ēm smṛtyākarṣiṇī*
8. *lṃ dhairyākarṣiṇī*
9. *lūm cittākarṣiṇī*
10. *ṛṃ gandhākarṣiṇī*
11. *tṛṃ rasākarṣiṇī*
12. *um rūpākarṣiṇī*
13. *ūm sparśākarṣiṇī*
14. *em śabdākarṣiṇī*
15. *aiṃ ahaṃkārākarṣiṇī*
16. *aum budhyākarṣiṇī*

### THE EIGHT INNER PETALS:

17. *ṭṃ ṭhṃ ḍṃ ḍhṃ ṇṃ*
    *anaṅgamadanā*
    *kulasundarī tvarita*
18. *śṃ ṣṃ sṃ hṃ anaṅgakuśa*
    *nilapatāka nitya*
19. *tṃ thṃ dṃ dhṃ nṃ*
    *anaṅgamadanāturā*
    *sarvamaṅgalā vijaya*
20. *śṃ kṣṃ anaṅgamālinī*
    *citrā jvālamālinī*
21. *kṃ khṃ gṃ ghṃ ṅṃ*
    *anaṅgakusuma*
    *kāmeśvarī mahātripurasundarī*
22. *pṃ phṃ bṃ bhṃ mṃ*
    *anaṅgarekhā*
    *nityaklinna bhagamālinī*
23. *cṃ chṃ jṃ jhṃ ñṃ*
    *anaṅgamekhalā*
    *vahnivāsiṇī bherundī*
24. *yṃ rṃ lṃ vṃ*
    *anaṅgavāgiṇi*
    *śivadūtī mahāvidyeśvarī*

### THE TRIANGLES:

25. *kṃ sarvasamkṣobhiṇī*
26. *khṃ sarvavidrayaṇī*
27. *gṃ sarvākarṣiṇī*
28. *ghṃ sarvāhladinī*
29. *ṅm sarvasamohinī*
30. *cṃ sarvasthambhiṇī*
31. *chṃ sarvajṛmbhiṇī*
32. *jṃ sarvavasaṅkarī*
33. *śṃ sarvarañjinī*
34. *jñṃ sarvonmādinī*
35. *ṭṃ sarvārthasādhinī*
36. *ṭhṃ sarvasampattipūraṇī*
37. *ḍṃ sarvamantramayī*
38. *ḍhṃ sarvadvakṣayaṅkarī*
39. *ṇṃ sarvasiddhipradā*
40. *tṃ sarvasampadpradā*
41. *thṃ sarvapriyaṅkarī*
42. *dṃ sarvamaṅgalakāraṇī*
43. *dhṃ sarvakāmapradā*
44. *nṃ sarvadukhavimocanī*
45. *pṃ sarvamṛtyaupraśamaṇī*
46. *bhṃ sarvavighnanivārinī*
47. *bṃ sarvaṅgasundarī*
48. *phṃ sarvasaubhāgyadāyinī*
49. *aum*
50. *śrīṃ*
51. *aiṃ*
52. *hrīṃ*
53. *sauṃ*



Śrīcakra

## *VERSE TWENTY-THREE*

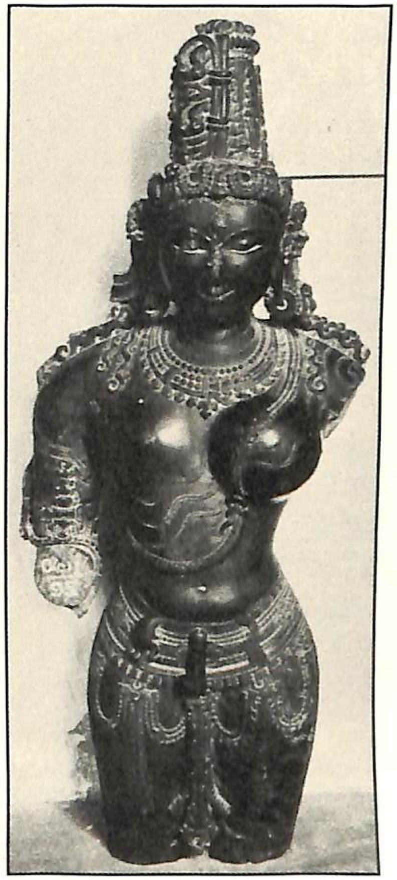
*tvāyahṛtvā vāmam vapuraparitṛptena manasā*
*śarīrārdham śambhoraparamapi śaṅkehṛtamabhūt*
*yadetattvadrūpam sakalamaruṇābham trinayanam*
*kucābhyāmānamram kuṭilaśaśicūḍāla makuṭam*

O Mother, after absorbing the left half of *Śiva's* body
and still unsatisfied by that in your mind, I surmise you have
absorbed the other half as well. Therefore, your entire form
appears to be blushing with magenta glory.
I see you with three eyes,
your hair decorated by a crescent moon and
your body slightly bent forward by a pair of breasts.

Yoga is the harmonized union of the supreme spirit and the tri-basic nature of manifestation. In the discipline of *prāṇayāma*, it is the *prāṇa* and *apāna* coming into conjunction and vitalizing the whole system as *vyāna* and *samāna*. For the yogi, this union also includes the mingling of the *iḍā* and the *piṅgala* in the *suśumna*. In man-woman dialectics, yoga is the cancelling out of all conflicting contradiction, with each side becoming complementary and compensatory to the other. The highest model of that union is seen in *ardhanārīśvara*, the androgynous union of *Śiva* and *Śakti*. In Vedānta an example of harmonious union that is often given is that of a transparent crystal placed on a hibiscus flower. Irrespective of the separate existence of the bodies of the crystal and the flower, the crystal looks all red. This does not do any harm to the crystal, nor is it accomplished by destructuring the crystal or the flower. Instead a union of both is effected by the ensemble.

The purpose of yoga is two-fold. One intent is to go from plurality to the oneness or aloneness of unity, *kaivalya*; the other is to achieve the welfare of the world, *lokasaṁgrahā*. *Śiva* and *Śakti* are not two persons. They only stand for, respectively, the plus and the minus of the primeval cause of the universe and the source of the sustenance of the world. Those yogis who opt to enter into aloneness give primacy to the model of *Śiva*. Those who desire to bring welfare to the universe choose to become identified with the perfect example of the Mother. Neither *Śiva* nor *Śakti* are outside factors. They are like the alternating systole and diastole of the heartbeat. Only through a synchronizing of these complementary counterparts does the life process continue. From the previous verse on the worship of *śrīcakra*, we have seen the several areas of functional details that are included in the *Śiva-Śakti* union or the yoga of spirit and nature. When we take the simple example of a candle burning, it is fire that burns. For its actualization there has to be the wax or fat for fuel and a wick to sustain the flame. The flame itself is a transformation of the fat. All these physical factors are like the embodiment of fire. However central the fire is, it is seen only as a candle burning. The same is true of the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti* in us. That is why, in the very first verse of the *Saundaryalaharī*, it is said that unless *Śakti* conjoins with *Śiva* the principle that *Śiva* represents cannot function.

The yogi who gains total identification with both *Śiva* and *Śakti* will show the characteristics of the Mother as described in the present verse. The dichotomy of the physical and the spiritual is resolved. The body becomes a receptacle of the purest joy of the spirit. The body we speak of here is the microcosm expanded and extrapolated into the macrocosm. All effects are revisioned as belonging to the original cause. In fact, this is the principle of all religions. Loving God with all your heart and all your mind and all your ability can be actualized only by loving one's neighbor as oneself. The brotherhood of man ensues from the fatherhood of God. In the *Īśā Upaniṣad*, compassion for all is based on the nondual unity of the one Self that has become all this. The Supreme Mother absorbing the reality of *Śiva* in all its entirety is

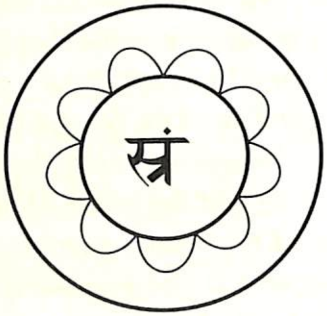


Ardhanārīśvara, *the androgynous* Śiva. *Polished black stone carving. Purapara, Bangladesh. Pāla period, ca. late eleventh century - early twelveth century.*

*In striking graphic form, Indian art displays the dynamic unity of opposites that* Śiva-Śakti *represent. In one body the two complementary halves are shown as mutually dependant and reinforcing. They cannot even be separated into a pair of bodies. At the center of conjunction is the vertical third eye of wisdom and insight that is attained through a harmonious balancing of male and female, transcendant and immanent.*

the same as a yogi seeing his Self in all and all in his own Self. The two eyes in the physical body are only to look and recognize individual bodies. The third eye is both to illuminate and to see. It is this third eye that clearly indicates that there is no separation between spirit and the nature through which the spirit manifests. While unmanifested light is invisible, manifested light assumes all colors. The magenta glory of the Mother stands for the coloration of the *Śiva* principle to become identified with *Śakti*. The two breasts to which specific reference is made are also significant. The breasts of the Mother symbolize the sustenance of the world. In Chinese mysticism (Mahayāna Buddhism) Kwan Yin, the compassionate aspect of Lord Buddha, is depicted as a woman lovingly holding a baby in her lap. In Christian life also, piety is coupled with works. St. Francis is a good example of the motherly breast that makes spiritual life full. All the ordeals that a yogi undergoes in the worship of the *śrīcakra* serve only make him or her tender and compassionate and unselfish like a mother in caring for the world to which he or she belongs.

The *mantra sraṃ* is placed within a schematisized lotus that is within a circle for this verse's meditation.



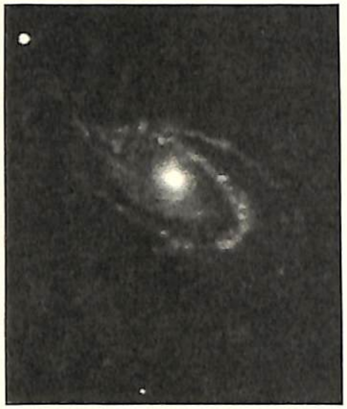
*sraṃ*

## *VERSE TWENTY-FOUR*

*jagatsūte dhātā hariravati rudraḥ kṣapayate*
*tiraskurvannetat svampai vapurīśastirayati*
*sadāpūrvassarvam tadidam anugṛhṇāti ca śivaḥ*
*tavājñāmālambya kṣaṇa calitayorbhrūlatikayoḥ*

O Mother, Brahmā creates this world, Viṣṇu sustains it,
and Rudra dissolves all. Absorbing everything
in his own body, he veils even himself.
The supreme *Śiva*, who has *sadā*, the eternal,
for the prefix of his name, blesses the entire world process
by taking a hint from the momentary flickering
of your eyebrows, which resemble a tender creeper,
and carrying out your command.

The sun, rising above the horizon, brings day to the world. Consciousness awakening between the eyebrows brings the wakeful state to man. The day rouses all living beings to get up and enter into the scheduled program of the day. The wakeful state reminds the individual of the action of the previous day and urges him or her to schedule assignments and transact each one in an orderly manner. The architect of the universe is called Brahmā, the *viśvakarman* or the cosmic action agent. Wakeful consciousness is the assessor,



*Galaxy reproduction from the* Hubble Atlas of Galaxies.

*The galaxies of our physical world represent one pole of the cosmos that is controlled by Īśvara, whose mathematics and law regulate our worlds of actions and dreams. All of these micro- and macrocosmic worlds are animated by the "quivering eyebrows" of the Mother.*

the one who measures, classifies, structures, examines, and utilizes all the given data with the intention of actualizing each moment that is coming in a linear fashion. The seriousness of actualization compels the individual consciousness to focus on one central value at a time and to relate the precedent and the antecedent to the given central value. He is not *viśvakarman*, the cosmic agent of action, but *viśva abhimāni*, the reckoner of the given universe in a specific context. Passing moments are highly significant to the assessor. It is a tireless job. As soon as one is examined, judged and its affectivity recorded, it is to be pushed into the realm of memory. Each day has its recurring chores. There is a beginning and end to the day's work program. There is a moral conscience accompanying the carrying out of these chores. Failure to carry out a command from the invisible, unknown dictator of life can cause anxiety, panic, and a sense of guilt. At the cosmic level, Brahmā carries out this role. At the individual level, transactional consciousness is responsible. What Brahmā is to the world, the transactional ego is to each of us.

The cosmos is a self-generating system with its own designs and ongoing programs. Considering the physical limitation of the individual, the assignment allotted to the generative light within is vast and complex. It has a vertical depth and horizontal extensions. This second principle of self-generation is, for the cosmos, Viṣṇu, and for the individual, *taijasa*, the principle of subjectivity. Even when the physical data are removed from sense accessibility, the image is held intact so that a continuity of experience can be maintained, both in its contiguity and progressive actualization. Even in the gross actual world where percept dominates, the *taijasa* has to supply prefabricated concepts. In another way, we can say that the drama of wakeful life is enacted on the stage of dream. Modern psychologists tire themselves out interpreting dreams in terms of the wakeful when it should be the other way around, that is, interpreting the wakeful as an actualization of dream.

We have now seen the correspondence between the cosmic Brahmā and Viṣṇu and the two personalized items of *viśva abhimāni*, the world assessor, and *taijasa*, the grand manipulator of dreams. Both the wakeful experience of gross objects and the dream experience of manipulated symbols structured out of memory fragments have to move, just like the still pictures of cinematic film. There is a forceful snatching away, both from the assessor and the fiction manipulator, of the themes in their hands. There is no clear demarcation between wakeful creation and its subjective continuation. But again and again a witnessing consciousness notices the disappearance of the

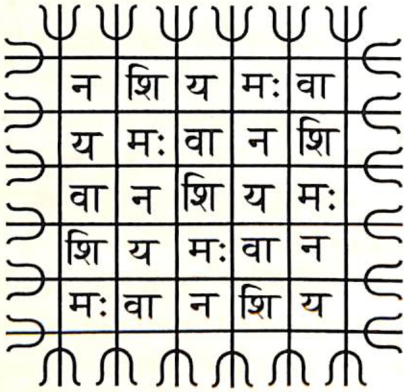
Samrat Yantra. *Designed by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II. Jaipur, India. Circa 1734.*

*These buildings were constructed as instruments to study the movements of planets and stars and as a* yantra *on a grand architectural scale. They served not only as tools of observation but as a means of relating humans to the larger movements of the cosmos.*

theme that was holding the attention at a particular moment in time. At the cosmic level, the scenario changes. The starry heavens of the night are made to flee when the first news of the light of the rising sun flings its stone on the sultan's turret, as Omar Khayam wrote. The sun that reigns supreme for nearly twelve hours is drowned in the depth of the ocean and the stars are beckoned back to the sky. It is as if there is a cosmic program of destruction, devastation and transmutation going on at all times. It saddens us that each coming together ends in departure. This sadness of inevitable transmutation is poetically called Rudra. Rudra is derived from *rōdana,* crying out or howling. In personal consciousness, the pain of leaving an enjoyable experience is mitigated with the inducement of sleep. A creeping myopia benumbs consciousness and dissolves it in the unconscious. At the cosmic level it is Rudra and at the personal level it is *avyākṛta,* the grand effacer of all distinct forms. There is no danger of destruction. There is only the hiding of all specific details. This is an act of *nigṛha* or making it impossible to grasp.

These multifarious functions, both cosmic and psychological, could not happen with such precision and regularity without there being behind them all one supreme controller. The controller is Īśvara. Īśvara is mathematics, law, and the uncompromising executive function in and throughout the macrocosm and the microcosm. This controller Īśvara is the brightest and most independent light that shines as the all-witnessing president of consciousness. He is both Jīveśvara, the lord of the individual, and Parameśvara, the supreme lord of all. It is at their behest that Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra are deployed to play their games and to withdraw when necessary. The role of Īśvara is *tirodhāna,* the stage manager who decides when the curtain is to be dropped or raised.

The entire game is played within the changeless being which has no reference to time or space, mass or motion, name or form, or even cause and effect. This changeless being is transcendence pure and simple. Personal consciousness is allowed to know the first three levels of transformation through perception, through imagination, and through deductive reasoning. *Tirodhāna* and transcendence are known only through superconscious imperience. Experiential aspects are called *anubhava* and imperiential identity is called *anubhūti*. The grand scheme of the *Saundaryalaharī* is to present transcendental immanence and immanent transcendence as a unitive single whole. Therefore, all the incidents that happen within a span of twenty-four hours in personal consciousness and in several cycles of the creation and dissolution of the cosmos always have an immanent programmer inseparably united with transcendence. That is figuratively mentioned in this verse as the time signal given by the quivering eyebrows of the Mother. She is also described in the previous verse as the enveloping magenta glory that pervades the Lord. *Na* stands for Brahman, *maḥ* for Viṣṇu, *śi* for Rudra, *vā* for Īśvara, *ya* for *Sadāśiva*. When they are put together it is the Mother, *namaḥśivāya*. All of these *mantras* are meditated upon with the following checkerboard-patterned *yantra*.



| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| न | शि | य | मः | वा |
| य | मः | वा | न | शि |
| वा | न | शि | य | मः |
| शि | य | मः | वा | न |
| मः | वा | न | शि | य |

*na, maḥ, śi, vā, ya*

## *VERSE TWENTY-FIVE*

*trayāṇāṃ devānāṃ triguṇajanitānāṃ tavaśive*
*bhavetpūjā pūjā tava caraṇayoryā viracitā*
*tathāhi tvatpādodvahanamaṇipīṭhasya nikaṭe*
*sthitā hyete śāśvanmukulitakarottaṃ samukuṭāḥ*

O Consort of *Śiva*, the three gods, who generate your triple nature modalities, what worship they offer to your twin feet, that worship is the worship indeed. Standing eternally beside the gem-decked footstool on which your feet rest, their hands are joined, bud-like, well above their crowns.

Verses twenty-five, twenty-six and twenty-seven are to be taken together as a unit. In verse twenty-five the reference is to the cycle of daily life's functions and in verse twenty-six to its dissolution. The kind of worship that is examined in these two verses is restated in twenty-seven. In the *Saundaryalaharī* there is a special blend of the concepts of Vedānta and Tantra. In Vedānta the Absolute is pure existence, pure subsistence, and the unitive ground of all values: *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. The relative or conditioned is composed of the triple modalities, *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*. This is the unresolved duality of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* that is postulated by the Sāmkhyan school. The dichotomy persists in a disguised manner even in Śankara's philosophy. In Tantra, the twin principles of *Śiva* and *Śakti* are unified into a single principle, giving primacy to *Śakti* in the form of the Supreme Mother. In that aspect the Mother is not *prakṛti*. Instead she becomes the most numinous central principle and the triple modalities of nature are assigned to the divinities of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra.

In the present verse, these gods are said to be serving the purpose of the Divine Mother, standing at her foot stool, ever ready to carry out all her orders. This picturesque representation can benefit us only if we understand our daily life as a divine function. Whether we are sitting in meditation or performing a work, there is a constant numinous principle which is always shining within us. It is in the light of that unnamable pure being that everything is happening, and when we speak of the Mother our meditation should be in adoration of that absolute core of our being. This body of ours is the best instrument we have to carry out the divine scheme of life. As soon as we wake up, we are offering that body for the day's activities. All creative energy is channelled through our organs of action and no lethargy or hesitation to work is tolerated. This is the same as saying Brahmā, the creative principle in us, is standing in adoration of the Absolute and carrying out his duties to the Supreme Mother who presides over our daily life.

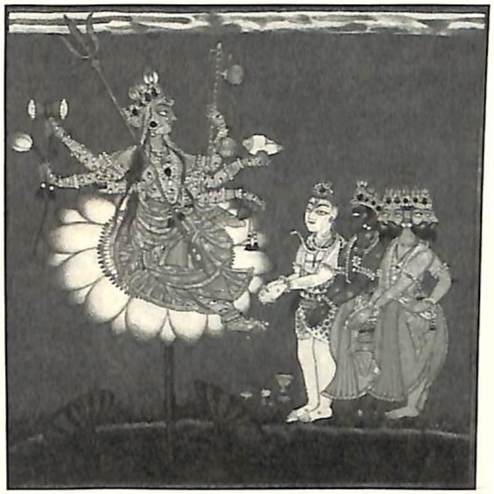
The organs of perception, the organs of action, and the mind require, to carry out their repsective duties, a consistent interest in the meaning of whatever is performed. What was left yesterday should find its continuation in today's work and then on into tomorrow's planning. Such alertness to recall the past and to actualize programs in the present can be poetically alluded to as the state of adoration in which Viṣṇu places himself. Viṣṇu's function can be compared to a computer ready to scan its memory loads and carry out commands. When thus viewed, Brahmā and Viṣṇu are none other

The Three Guṇas, *Andrew Larkin. Charcoal on paper. America. 1989.*

*The throb of being resonants in the silence of nothingness while the goddess continues her endless series of becoming. Each of her manifestations is regulated by the three modulations of nature:* sattva, *pure transparency;* rajas, *kinetic dynamics; and* tamas, *a veiling obscurity.*

than the programming of the cosmic mind and the carrying out of its commands.

In daily life, the future is as important as the past and the present is always to be processed and stored for the future. This is done through a number of reductions of the gross into the subtle and the subtle into the causal. Everything is accounted for in order to provide a sense of interconnection. If Brahmā and Viṣṇu are respectively treated as *sattva* and *rajas*, Rudra is of the nature of *tamas*. The role of *tamas* is in the unconscious and this role need not always be tragic. Soon after a thing is performed, it is removed from wakeful consciousness so that a new gestalt can be called up and the closed gestalts stored away. The past is like an oblivion which is continuously swallowing up the present. This is happening every moment of our lives. It is to be considered as the duty performed by Rudra.

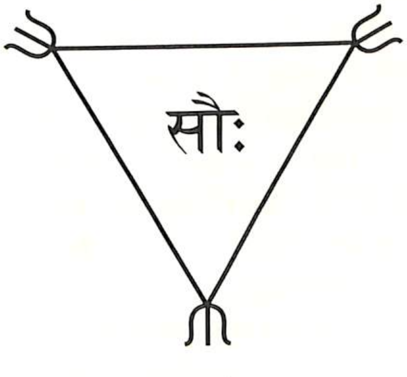


Brahmā, Śiv*a* and Viṣṇu Worship the goddess, *from a Devī series. Basohi, India. Ca. 1660-1670.*

*The three gods of the manifested world pay homage to the goddess who is seated on the lotus of realization. She holds the objects that indicate both her male and female sides: the trident, drum and conch shell for* Śiva, *and the vina, cymbals and lotus for* Śakti.

Instead of anthropomorphically conceiving gods and demi-urges, one can perform one's natural duties and it is already a worship of the proper kind. One's creativity, memory recall and the ingesting of all ongoing experiences can be true worship without giving any religious coloration to it. Terms like *satcidānanda, sattva, rajas, tamas*, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra are to be interpreted in terms of a dynamic consciousness of values. What is experienced in the wakeful, in the dream and in the deep unconscious are complementary aspects of individual life and the same correlation is to be seen in a more elaborate manner in the cosmos. Every verse of the Sa*undaryalaharī* can thus be understood as the cosmic phenomena presented in miniature form within the psyche. The cosmos is reciprocally an elaboration of the psyche.

*Sauḥ* is placed as the *mantra* with the following *yantra* for meditation.



*sauḥ*

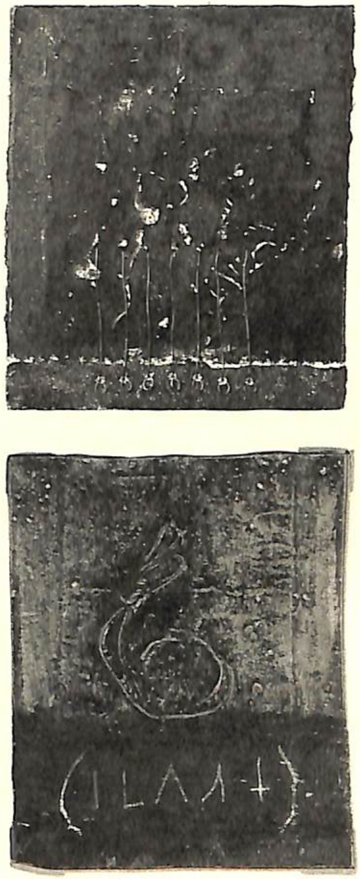
# *VERSE TWENTY-SIX*

*viriñciḥ pañcatvaṃ vrajati harirāpnoti viratiṃ*
*vināśaṃ kīnāśo bhajati dhanado yāti nidhanam*
*vitandrī māhendrī vitatirapi saṃmīlita dṛśā*
*mahāsaṃhāre 'smin viharati sati tvatpatirasau*

Brahmā regains his quintiple nature, Viṣṇu withdraws
from his interest, the annihilator meditates on death,
the god of wealth also perishes; and in a special way
the great Indra (along with the host of *manus*)
keeps his eyes half-closed. In that time of final dissolution,
O constant spouse of *Śiva*, your Lord alone sports.

The two counterparts of a knowledge situation are the knower and the known. A colored knowledge automatically presents a colored knower. When concentration is focused on an object, the subject also becomes tightened and the accompanying identity of the ego as knower becomes concretized. However, as one effortlessly withers off from active concentration, two simultaneous effacements happen, one on the objective side and the other on the subjective side. In the present meditation, both outer and inner knowledge and the knower are allowed to pale. If a picture is projected on a screen and then a more intense light is also allowed to fall there, the projected picture will disappear. Light and shadow taken together are the medium for visual projection. If there is no opacity that can be silhouetted by light, then forms are not highlighted. The meditation in this verse brings the meditator closer and closer to the source of illumination and being. The withering away of the creative principle, or rather the projective principle, of Brahmā is the diving board from which the meditator plunges into the unique experience of unwinding individuation.

From a distance the moon looks very beautiful, yet a closer look shows ugly craters. The five elements which constitute the phsyical world of matter appear to be concrete because of the organization of the basic particle energy. In Vedānta the compostion of matter is called *pañcikaraṇa*, quintiplication. That is, each element is stabilized by combining the subtle *tanmātras* of all the other elements with it. *Tanmātra* means that which is measured by itself only. In other words, in the concrete, gross material of earth there are also the other four elements, water, fire, air and *ākāśa*. When from the composition of an aggregate, the elements return to their primeval nature and there is no stuff of creation to sustain bodies, this is poetically referred to as the resolving of Brahmā into the constituents of quintiplication.



The Barcelona Series: Memory *and* Instinct, *Larry Aleshire. Found object collages. America. 1992.*

*A series of collages portraying various aspects of consciousness, with the two presented here focusing on memory and instinct.*

Two natural exercises in meditation which are given free to all sentient beings are deep sleep and death. Both silence the recall of memory. What disturbs the mind are the busy-bee-like thoughts that rake up memories of people, incidents, and pain-pleasure conditionings. It is cosmic memory that makes the planets follow the same orbit again and again. It is individual memory which recalls fixed concepts to identify percepts of identical nature. Here, in the meditation of this verse, memories are allowed to lie buried. The function of Viṣṇu ceases. Establishing concentration means that distracting memories vanish. In the final vanishing of memory, the Self forgets its agency of being the knower or doer or enjoyer. When one immerses oneself deeply into meditation, there is no memory of that person's body seated in a particular place. There is no recognition of anything that is happening around. Consequently, there is no registry of experience, nor the promptings to recall memory to associate with anything that is coming into mind. In fact, nothing comes. This is mentioned in the present verse as Viṣṇu withdrawing all interest from correlating percepts with concepts.

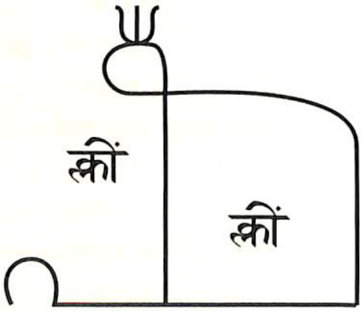
If a person passes away while in a deep sleep or coma, so far as consciousness is concerned there is no demarcation between life and death. In this ultimate merger, there is no need to label the dissolution as a death caused by this incident or that incident. It is said in this verse that the god of death has gone into a meditation on death: the rivers that enter the ocean fail to retain their identities after merging with water.

The outward pursuits of life are mainly to secure the means that can bring happiness. That happiness is nothing but a relative pleasure contrasted with pain. But when there is no action, no specific knowledge and no act of enjoyment, the means to attain happiness are no longer required. This is beautifully put in the phrase, "The god of wealth also perishes."

One opens one's eyes and looks at the objective world outside. One can also turn the eyes inward and recognize the knower. A third possibility is inertial darkness overpowering consciousness and sleeping like a log of wood. This is the common experience of every person: to be wakeful, to dream, or to sleep. In the present meditation, termed an ultimate meditation, one transcends both the sleeping and waking states. Narayana Guru describes it as remaining without sleeping and without waking yet stabilized in the pure state of consciousness through and through. Everything is negated. But even in the most oblivating negation, there is an is. Ultimately, this is, *tadeva sat*.

One looks on with wonder, one listens with wonder, one speaks with wonder. Even after seeing, listening and speaking, the deepest mystery of the highest wonder remains unresolved.

This meditation uses the *mantra klīṃ* with the following *yantra*.



*klīṃ*

## *VERSE TWENTY-SEVEN*

*japo jalpaḥ śilpaṃ sakalamapi mudrā viracanā*
*gatiḥ prādakṣiṇyakramaṇamaśanādyā hutividhiḥ*
*praṇāmaḥ saṃveśaḥ sukhamakhilamātmārpaṇadṛśā*
*saparyā paryāyastava bhavatu yanme vilasitam*

May my mutterings be your incantations;
works of my hand, ritualistic gesture;
my movement, your circumnambulation;
the partaking of food, offerings of consecration;
and lying down, prostration;
all enjoyments and whatever is seen in me,
may they be the synomyms of worship of you.

The cock crows, the cat mews, the dog barks, the lion roars, the donkey brays, and man speaks. All of these are creatures crawling on the surface of a mud ball called earth, one of the planets circling a small star called the sun, on the fringe of the Milky Way galaxy. No one even knows how many galaxies there are. So what does it matter what a certain creature, so infinitely small, does in a remote corner of the universe? Can any being ever conceive the totality of the source from which the universe is unfolding?

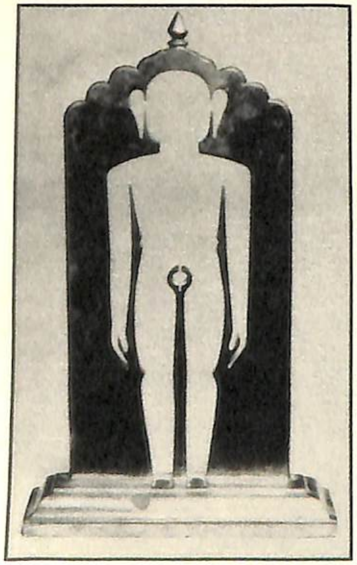
Yet man makes a variety of noises, and he has the ingenuity to classify them into names and verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Some words are adorable, holy, inspired, and revealed. Other words are for frequent use in the marketplace. Some others are even undignified, obscene and used only by the vulgar. When the child pretends, it forgets it is pretending. Similarly, man creates make-believe gods, temples for such gods, and out of the few noises he can make he pretends to believe that some of them are efficacious devices to glorify the Creator or Creatrice. He not only becomes serious in his mimickings of religion, he even becomes fanatical. Just as he names pots and pans, cats and dogs, he also names the unnameable. He fights over these names and kills his fellow men when there is disagreement in the names they use.

So in adoration, the devotee says:

"O Supreme One, I do not know who you are. This voice of mine is a gift from you. I do not know by which tune I can propitiate you. Although I take pride in my articulation, it is just one of a multitude of sounds. My intention is to pray and to sing praises and songs of adoration, so whatever sound comes from me, please accept it. You are inconceivable.

Jaina icon of the released spirit. *Engraved Brass. Rājasthān, India. Eighteenth century.*

*The hollow body of the liberated one,* jina, *allows the universal breath to pass through it unhindered by modulations or distortions.*

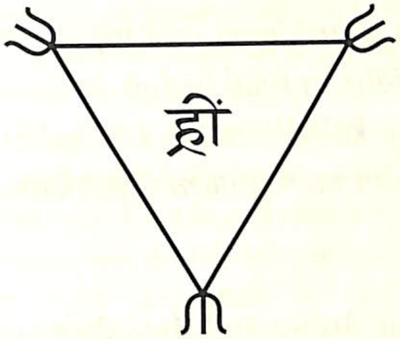


"Priests, shamans, magicians, witches, all have developed various rituals, and they believe that with their postures, gesticulations and liturgies they are offering worship to you. I am too simple to understand all this. You have given me these hands and legs. Each day I move them in so many ways and accomplish action as dictated by needs. I do not know any other ritual. Should I be ritualistic? Then please accept every action of mine as a ritualistic gesture. I see people circumambulating as if you are a piece of stone and you are seated in a temple built by their hands. When you are omnipresent and you have no limits, how can I ever walk around you? With the two legs you have given, I move about a little. May that be my circumambulation.

"It is ridiculous that I am expected to feed you. This world is yours. All elements in it are yours. This body is yours, these hands and legs are yours. How can I offer you anything? It is your decree that I should eat and drink, sleep and play, until this toy of personalized being perishes. So when I eat and drink may it please be considered as my offering to you.

"Where are your feet? In which direction should I prostrate so that I can unmistakably place my forehead at your feet? I do not know. I do not know anything, so whenever I lie down, please consider that I am prostrating at your feet. Look at my wretched state. Even the 'I' in me of which I am so proud is sportively placed in this person by you. It is a funny little device which is trying to put the whole in the part. You who see through all my mimicings and pretensions, please give at least a little credit to my intentions. I am a gift from you. Please accept it back as a total surrender. Words fail me. What throbs here as the consciousness of this finite, helpless creature, let it be filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I am yours. *Aum.*"

*Hrīṃ*, this verse's *mantra*, is located within a triangle on its apex.



*hrīṃ*

## *VERSE TWENTY-EIGHT*

*sudhāmapyāsvādya pratibhaya jarā mṛtyu hariṇīṃ*
*vipadyante viśve vidhiśatamakhādyā diviṣadaḥ*
*karāḷaṃ yat kṣvelaṃ kabalitavataḥ kālakalanā*
*na śaṃbhostanmūlaṃ tava janani tāṭaṅkamahimā*

Even though Brahmā, Indra and the other gods
have drunk *amṛta*, the elixir of immortality,
to everyone in the world death comes.
But to Śambhu, *Śiva*, who has drunk the most terrible poison,
*kalakūṭa*, no extinction comes. O Mother,
this speaks of the greatness of your ear ornaments, *tāṭaṅka*.

Time ticks. In the ticking of each second, time is coming, time is, and time is going. When it is gone, another second is coming. Like the sequential movement of time, the mind continues to recognize its expectation, the actualization of the expectation, and the memory of what is gone. The entire wakeful consciousness is marked by the movement of time. A busy person again and again looks at his watch and curses the passing of time. A person in boredom also looks at time and complains that it is dragging. A joyous person forgets time. For every person, there is a fresh beginning of the day and a beautiful slipping into sleep. Thus, time can be experienced as this passing moment of this day that is being lived. Time begins from the moment of birth and it comes to a close as a conscious experience when life terminates. In spite of the many intermittent lapses of consciousness, time is not allowed to fragment the contiguity of life. Desires are not fulfilled in a single second, not even in a single day. The full unfoldment and fruition of an individual takes an entire life span to come to its conclusion or fulfillment.

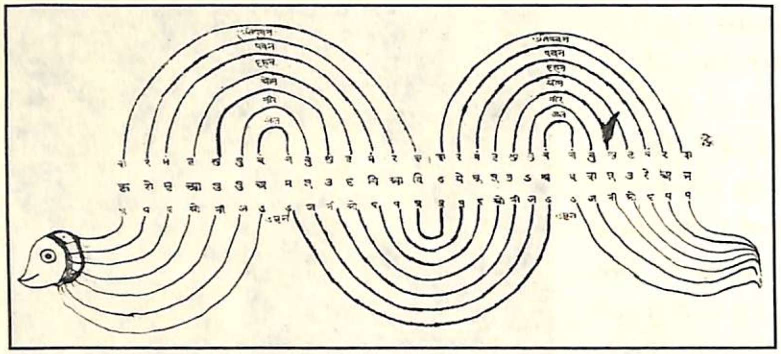
For this reason, every person is trying to immortalize the finest blossoms of his or her mind. Everyone wants to catch the attention of other people. All want to proclaim to the world that they exist. They are photographed. Names are advertized and voices cultured to make them attractive. The desire not to leave the arena of life, to be here, if possible in youthful persistence, is the ambition of all. In Indian mythology, this ambition is described as the churning of the milk ocean and the partaking of *amṛta*, the elixer of immortality. This churning process is going on even today: when one's mind is applied so as to achieve a clear, crystal vision of hidden secrets, it is an act of churning.

Detail of a carved stone frieze. *Banteay Srei, Cambodia. Late tenth century.*

*An elongated earlobe and an ornate ear ornament were long considered in Indian aesthetics as a sign of beauty and refinement in women.*

The triple modalities of nature are clarity, kinetics and opacity. In Sanskrit, these triple modalities are *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. *Sattva* is considered white, *rajas* is red, and *tamas* is black. These are inseparables. Gaining clarity helps one find a way out of the traps of life. With clear notions we have advanced science and through hard work we have advanced technology. Though we may have progressed on the plus side of human achievement, *tamas* has also unfortunately appeared. In the myth of the churning of the ocean, the negative pole is characterized as the world-annihilating poison. In fact, the present day is facing that negative pole with a shivering spine. From the churning of intellect we have received many boons, but now we are facing an almost imminent devastation of life on earth. Is there a way out? The search so far has only been in the analytical field of the phenomenon. In the mad gold rush for success, the search has gone ex-centric. Rediscovering the center is the only correction. This correction can be achieved by moving the search into the vertical ascendant.

It is a pity that we do not see what is obvious. Even in the little shar-



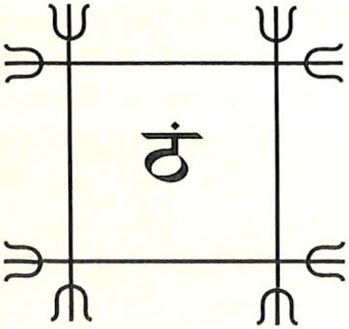
River Snake of Time from a Jain manuscript. *Ink on paper. India. Nineteeth century.*

*The eternal recurrence of the seven-fold divisions of the universe as a cosmic river of time is here given form as a snake, symbol of fecundity.*

ing and care we give to those who are closest and dearest to us, including our pets and the plants of our gardens, the health of the good earth shows us the unmistakable lesson of the interconnectedness of all and the purposeful continuation of everything in the world. If only we ask, "Whose purpose?" Then we can open our eyes to the hidden dimension of life. The far-off star and the cells of our bodies enter into a new alliance. The entire function of the universe becomes grounded in the timeless. This is glorified in the present verse as the supreme lord, *Śiva*, whom fire does not burn and poison does not kill. If there is no ground, there also cannot be any superimposition. Taking away the ground is widowing the performance. In the Indian tradition, the removal of a woman's ear ornament, *tāṭaṅkam*, is the sign of her becoming a widow. The world-perpetuating process is not widowed in spite of the opening and closing of several cycles. That same unassailable reality is also the ground of our being.

We have to touch both the transactional verity of life and its transcendental sublimity. At the periphery are our desires or volitions and our actions. Desire comes from incipient memories, Viṣṇu; the volition of creation from Brahmā; performance from Indra. All propitiations are given only to our desire, our will and our actions. By shifting it all to the overseeing numenon and its overruling universal will, our spiritual discipline becomes complete. Then the purposiveness of our life will not be widowed.

The *mantra ṭhaṃ* is located within the *yantra* for meditation.



*ṭhaṃ*

## *VERSE TWENTY-NINE*

*kirīṭaṃ vairiñcaṃ parihara puraḥ kaiṭabhabhidaḥ*
*kaṭhore koṭire skhalasi jahi jambhārimakuṭam*
*praṇamreṣveteṣu prasabhamupayā tasya bhavanaṃ*
*bhavasyābhyuthāne tava parijanoktirvijayate.*

"Restore Brahmā's crown;
Before you is Viṣṇu's hard head gear
(you may hit it inadvertently);
Save Indra's crown."
When they are all bowing before you, and you suddenly
rise to face your Lord who is coming home,
these words of your retinue ring supreme.

That which happened yesterday has gone to sleep. Today it resurrects with fresh vigor and new designs. Even the tiniest seed of the weakest grass blown away in the wind seizes the slighest opportunity to sprout and once again become a plant. This is the scheme of life that is deposited in every seeded form. The fecund power of life is difficult to suppress. The tendril of a root looks so soft, and yet with patience it can penetrate through a rock to reach a source of water. This is the domain of Viṣṇu. Everything is

The goddess Pārvati. *Carved stone. Style of the tenth century. Found in Champa (ancient Vietnam).*

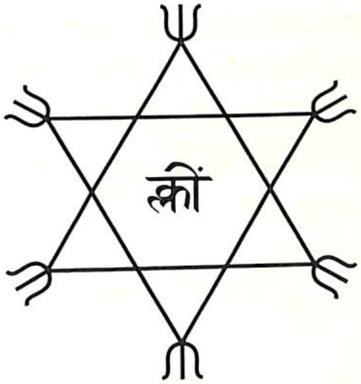
sustained through an innate arrangement of exploding dynamics, and thus Viṣṇu is the main programmer of life. No one has ever succeeded in pinpointing the beginning of life. Does it begin with the molecular arrangement of atoms, or the formation of crystals, or with virus and bacteria? All these come in one line. From the initial arrangement of sub-atomic particles to the strategic deployment of missiles by modern military officials, the vast domain of Viṣṇu is spread out. From the fragrance of the earth to the music of the spheres, Viṣṇu has a wide variety of choices with which to induce interest. Yet in spite of such supremacy over the entire domain of nature, he is at the feet of the Supreme Mother.

Incipient universal memory operates through the creative urge and the intelligence of individual beings. On waking up in the morning, the mind runs back and forth between yesterday and tomorrow and creates scheme after scheme to weave all the details of today into reality. This is Brahmā, the creator, busy in the anthill, the beehive, in the nests of birds, undersea with oceanic life, and in the world of humans where everyone is called to attention for the day's routine. Brahmā is the great rouser, the awakener, and the inducer, and he is the manager of this body-mind complex. His entire service is dedicated to the Supreme Mother. He is at her behest and can accomplish his actions only through the approval of the Supreme One. To receive her assent he is in constant prostration.

All transactional programs commence with the turning of the senses of perception toward objects of interest. The senses are the *indriyās*, but without the mind the senses cannot operate. Mind is Indra. The sensory system brings the input, and the output is through the motor system. Transportation, communication and productive performances are the business of the legs, the hands, and the mouth or tongue. These are the executive seats of Indra. He is like a project manager. Man is prone to err because his chief executive, Indra, is not flawless and lives in constant fear of being reprimanded by the Supreme. The crown of Indra, which is none other than our flamboyant mind, is in constant danger. That danger comes when an individual's life is suddenly pulled up to meet the requirements of spiritual emancipation.

While being immersed in the repetitive, routine chores of life, a glance from the Divine may rouse a person to look into the very purpose for which he or she has come to this world. Then that person is assailed by questions such as: "Who am I?" "What is this world?" "Why am I here?" Plato alludes to this in his simile of the cave. Countless generations of prisoners are in a dungeon, where everyone mistakes shadows for the real. Then one person is assailed by doubt. On facing his own doubt, he realizes the shackles of phenomenality. When placed in such a dire situation, he tries to turn one hundred and eighty degrees. This is metaphorically given in this verse as the Supreme Mother rising from her seat to meet her Lord. That arising disrupts all the orderly arrangements of socially oriented programs. Everything becomes disarranged. Then the mind turns away and walks in a new direction, like the young prince Siddhartha sneaking out of his wife's chamber, leaving her and their newborn babe to their own destiny, and crossing the borders of his country as a lone pilgrim in search of truth. This is like trampling under one's foot the crowns of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Indra.

When a person is about to make a spiritual turn, the entire world tries to dissuade him or her by asking for the duties and obligations of society to be fulfilled. The picturesque scene caricatured in this verse is to be seen in our own personal experiences of turmoil when we are touched by the most profound questions of a spiritual quest. As the aspirant meditates on this scene, the *mantra klīṃ* is placed within the following *yantra* of two overlaid triangles.



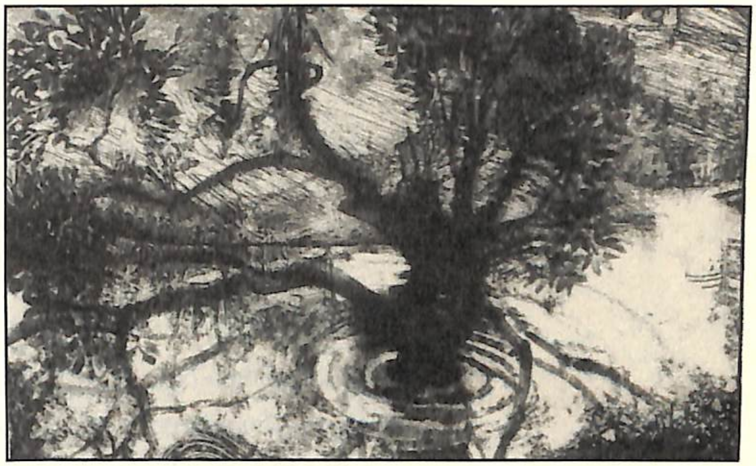
*klīṃ*

## *VERSE THIRTY*

*svadehodbhūtabhirghṛṇibhiraṇimādyābhirabhito*
*niṣevye nitye tvāmahamiti sadābhāvayati yaḥ*
*kimāścaryaṃ tasya trinayanasamṛdhiṃ tṛṇayato*
*mahāsaṃvartāgnirviracayati nirājanavidhim*

O Eternal One, attended on by the rays emanating
from your body, such as invisibility (*anima*)
and such other psychic powers!
For one who contemplated always, "You are me,"
what surprise is there that even all the benefits of the three-eyed
are treated by him as of no consequence,
and that the fire of doom should perform
for him the light-waving rite?

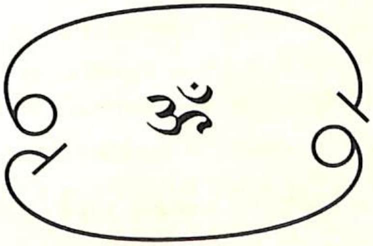
The angry father of a young boy called Naciketas threatened to give him away to Death. That threat aroused the interest of young Naciketas. Instead of running away from Death like a fugitive, he walked into the very den of Death with the intention of exacting from him the secret of dying. Death thought of persuading the young seeker to give up his search and live off all the bounties of this world: the priceless jewels of royalty, a harem of beautiful girls, all the things that tempt a person. On hearing the promise of these boons, Naciketas suggested that if the items were of such high value, Death himself could keep them. He, Naciketas, prized the knowing of truth more than riches. Satan paraded before Jesus with all the world's temptations. Jesus, however, did not see any value in these pleasures because in his heart he had one conviction, "I am that I am." At the hour of the awakening of Gautama into Buddhahood, Māra appeared before him with ten perceptual hallucinations and ten conceptual temptations, *rūparāga* and *arūparāga*, respectively. The Lord of Blessedness only smiled at the folly of Māra.



*Details from* The Three Guṇas, *Andrew Larkin. Charcoal on paper. America, 1989.*

*The growing tree with its widespread branches and deeply sunk roots epitomizes the transcendant immance of life. Like that, a yogi who is fully cognizant can confidently assert, "I am that I am."*

The yogi walking toward his own aloneness is in no need of proving himself to anyone. So Patañjali dismisses the eight psychic powers called *siddhis*. What truly matters is the conviction, "I am that I am." Once a Zen master was asked the difference between the Buddha and an ignorant person. The master said, "An ignorant man recognizes a tree to be a tree, and the Buddha recognizes a tree to be a tree." There is no formal distinction. But there is a vast sea of difference between the experiences of, "I am" and, "I am that I am." To avoid confusion, in this verse the meditation recommended is, "You are me, O Eternal One, *nitya*." The *mantra aum* is then placed within the *yantra* below for further contemplation.



*aum*

## *VERSE THIRTY-ONE*

*catuḥṣaṣṭyā tantraiḥ sakalamatisandhāya bhuvanaṃ*
*sthitas tat-tat siddhi presava para tantraih paśupatiḥt*
*punastvannirbandhādakhilapuruṣārthaikaghaṭanā*
*svatantraṃ te tantraṃ kṣititalamavātī taradidam.*

By sixty-four *tantras,* of which each is only capable
of generating its own overt function, the lord of beings
decreed the function of the entire world and remained unmoved.
Again by your insistence, he brought down to this world
your *tantra,* which can comprehensively achieve
the unified goal of all *tantras.*

Man is basically a beast. Like other animals, he engages in activities, eats, mates, idles away his time, and goes to sleep. Three states of consciousness that are predominant in all animals are the wakeful, the dream and deep sleep. Man is also capable of entering into a fourth state of consciousness, the transcendent. The entire consciousness of man falls in four quarters: the wakeful (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), deep sleep (*suṣupti*), and transcendence (*turīya*). These states are governed by the laws of the universe.

From atomic formations to galactic structures, the quality of composition varies according to the quantitative assemblage of the constituents of each composition. The nature of an item is decided by its innate constitution. That nature is called *dharma*. Through several generations of trial and error, search and experimentation, man discovered the *dharma* or nature of his own body-mind complex and of all the other bodies with which he transacts. A code of conduct has evolved as to how he can harmoniously deal with everything in this world, either at the physical level, the vital level, or the spiritual level. Thus, in the course of time, humankind became wise enough to have the *dharma* of understanding the innate nature of things and to pursue the purpose of his life.

Each state of consciousness has its own program for humans. The individual goes from situation to situation, with each situation being a new confrontation, a new challenge, a new mystery, and a new riddle. To resolve the situation, the aspirant should understand its meaning. The search for meaning or *artha* is inevitable in every given situation. Only in accordance with the meaning of a situation can one decide what action is desirable and what action is not. An action is a *karma*. The inducement for action comes from a desire, *kāma*. The appropriateness of a desire depends on its validity in a certain situation. Thus, *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* go hand in hand.

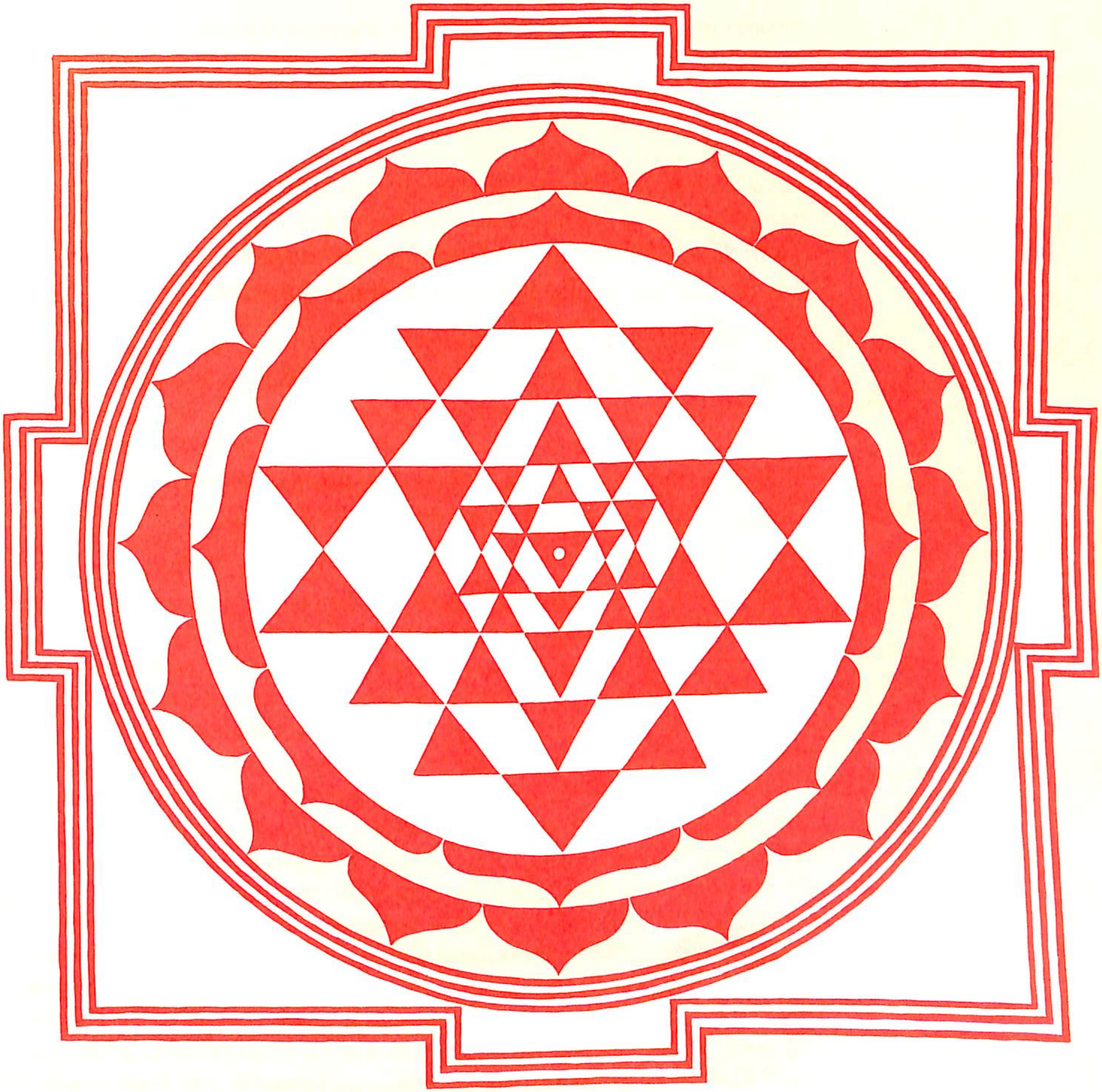
In all these three states, it is the general consciousness of a person that is animated and that undergoes modifications, *vṛttis*. Unmodified pure consciousness belongs to the fourth category, *mokṣa*. Even in the case of people who do not aspire to transcendental states, a certain amount of transcendence is immanent in their triple states of consciousness. Thus all are living within the four-fold division of consciousness. At an animal level, a person is compelled to act according to his animal instinct. A human being who has had no chance to be disciplined in a society will show the same behavior as a wild animal. The Maugli, or jungle man, is an example. Here a person has no conscious or purposive planning. He is at the mercy of nature's devices. Only when a person frees himself or herself from the wild dictates of animal nature does he or she enjoy the freedom of planning life and raising his or her consciousness to the higher level that can bring ultimate freedom. Therefore, *tantra* can be called *svatantra*, which is operating one's self in absolute freedom. *Paratantra*, on the other hand, is acting according to another's wish, compulsively or under duress.

When we look at the evolutionary history of living beings, for millions of years the actions of humans were dictated by their biological needs. This is referred to in this verse as the lord of beings assigning to every species its own natural function and remaining as an unmoved mover. Even in man's present state, there are countless millions who have no real value orientation. They live as opportunities lead them from day to day. Most people are even engaged in activities which have no resonance with their aptitudes. The mind desires one thing and the body is bartered to someone to do what one does not like. This is a clear case of living in *paratantra*. The Supreme Mother is presented in this verse as the voice of insistence to change the quality of life away from the sad state where we are riveted to the compulsiveness of blind nature. She wants to induce in her creatures an interest that will transport them to the highest vision.

Life is paradoxically placed between two values, necessity and freedom. Bread symbolizes necessity. The Self delighting in the Self is the sign of freedom. Some people do not aspire to become free. They resign themselves to fate and live in slavery. This absolute negation of a freedom goal in their lives makes them wretched, and they are called *śudras*. There are others who secure a certain amount of relativistic freedom by using the cunning of their minds. They give primacy to the means by which freedom can be bought and these people are called *vaiśyas* or traders. Calculative assessment is their main mode of behavior. There are others who gain relatively more freedom by becoming defenders of everyone's freedom, *kṣatriyas*. Then there are those who, with wisdom, minimize their desires. They maximize their freedom so as to go again and again to the transcendent heights of spiritual delight. From there one can go into absolute freedom. The Mother is showing to her votaries the final liberation of the soul. It is this insistence, which is like a compulsion, that cancels away blind compulsion and leads to transcendence.

Even when countless millions do not look far beyond their immediate world and live only in accordance with their animal instincts, for those who are spiritually inclined there is a way. That way is referred to as the Supreme Mother's *tantra*, which comprehensively unites in it all the four goals of man: knowing the nature of all, *dharma*; understanding the meaning of all, *artha*; desiring the most desirable, *kāma*; and liberating oneself into absolute freedom, *mokṣa*. *Śrīvidyā*, which is given in verse twenty-two, where the great dictum *tat tvam asi* (That thou art) is implied is the *tantra* again alluded to here. The highest knowledge is the knowledge that frees. Know and be free.

*Opposite.*
Śrīcakra. *Traditional Tantric yantra rendered by Andrew Larkin. Acrylic on paper. 1991.*



## *VERSE THIRTY-TWO*

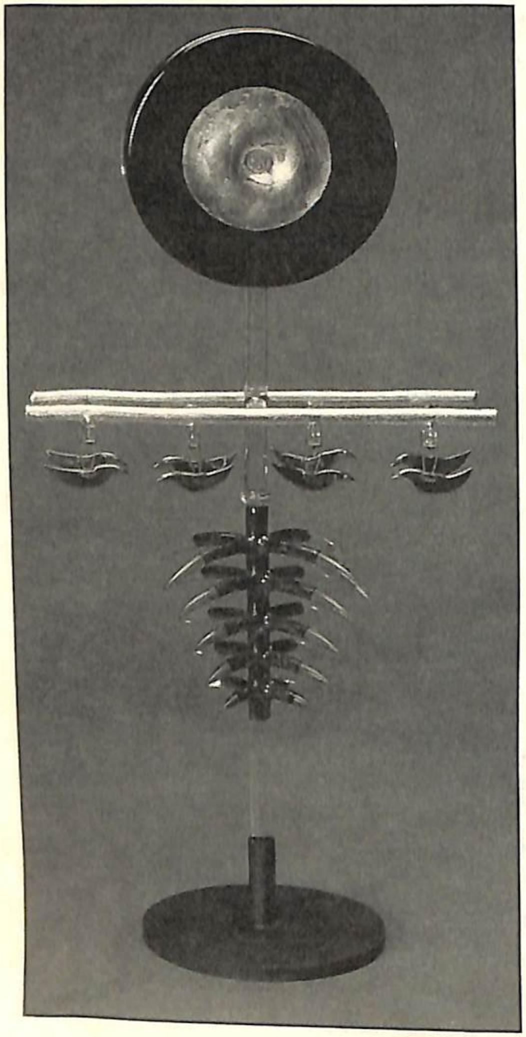
*śivaḥ śaktiḥ kāmaḥkṣitiratha raviḥ śīta kiraṇaḥ*
*smaro haṃsaḥ śakrastadanu ca parāmāraharayaḥ*
*amī hṛllekhābhisti sṛbhiravasāneṣu ghaṭitā*
*bhajante varṇāste tava janai nāmāvayavatām*

*Śiva*, *Śakti*, Kāma, Kṣiti, then Ravi, Śitakiraṇa, Smara,
Haṁsa, Śakra, and after them, Para and Mārahara;
These, when completed, with the three syllables *hrīṃ*
at their respective termination, as letters
become the components of your name, O Mother.

All inquiries, remembrances, judgements, resolutions to act, and appreciations, both positive and negative, are evoked by an irrefutable beingness. This is the starting point. Before the question, "What is this?" is framed, nothing is known. "It" has no name, no form. "It" does not provoke. "It" is like a beginningless state of absolute peace. "It" is *śivam*, pure beingness in itself. This is the basic foundation or *mūlādhāra* (*mūla*, basic; *ādhāra*, foundation). Yogis represent the *mūlādhāra* physically at the lower tip of the vertebrae. The central nervous system is mainly positioned as the cerebral function of the brain which continues in the vertebrae. If from the lowest tip of the spine to the crown of the head a vertical line is imagined, at the lowest point we can mark the alpha and at the crown the omega. The alpha is the state of one's own being.

The fire in wood does not show itself until it starts burning. Like the conflagration of a log, life is a burning process in us. Latent energy becomes actualized. In other words, within the state of being the process of becoming is initiated. Becoming is not an outside being, it is not other than being. *Śakti* operates: it is a process, it becomes affective. The flow of energy, whether vitalistic or psychic, is directed to accomplish a certain effect. It is as if a wish is materializing into action. That is *kāma*, which is essentially the dynamic to change one state into another. It is the transformation of a seed into a plant, a plant into a flowering state, a flowering plant into a fruiting plant, and fruits into a seed distribution system. Thus, purposive transformations follow one after another. This process can be seen in its most manifested state on the earth on which we live. On earth nothing remains unchanged or unchangeable. Hence, in Sanskrit, the earth is called *kṣiti*. *Kṣiti* means that which deteriorates. *Śiva*, *Śakti*, *kāma*, and *kṣiti* are respectively symbolized with the Sanskrit letters *ka*, *e*, *ī*, and *la* in the synergic center of the *mūlādhāra*. The flame of life springs up from this center, and the meditator postulates this region as the very beginning of creation so far as his or her personal consciousness is concerned. From the most imperishable Being to the most perishable earth, the theme of individuation is spread out as *Śiva*, pure Being; *Śakti*, procreative becoming; *kāma*, the desire to formulate; and *kṣiti*, actualizing transformation at the physical level. Thus pure spirit and gross physical matter are interlinked.

The release of energy is coupled with a desire-filled directive. In our world experience, the most pronounced elements are the form that we see and the name by which we recognize it. Form is a limitation in the phenomena of light and name is a sound token produced by vocal notes and pitches. Light as such has no form. Sound as such has no form. The primeval being, *Śiva*, can be meditated on as the all-filling light in which there is no flaw of any shade. *Śiva* can also be meditated upon as an all-filling sound which is beyond the scope of being heard. There light and sound are not two. This unity can be heard in the octave and can be seen in the spectrum: seven sounds and seven colors, two complementary aspects of primeval energy. In the process of individuation, the desire grows to see oneself and everything that sur-



Carroza Solar *(Solar Chariot), Susan Plum. Blown and lampwork glass. America. 1991.*

rounds that self in colorful forms and aesthetically patterned designs. Everything visualized is also spoken of and sung about. In human consciousness the region of sound is more pronounced than the visual region and has deeper significance. There are many musical sounds that can be heard but cannot be drawn or written. Yet, whether it is a jubilation of color or sound, an expression which is joyous gladdens the heart where all shades of emotion are felt. The desire within a person's heart flowers forth as the continuous search to enjoy. That quest is unbroken. It is *anāhata*, the heart, which is the second region of meditation.

One wants to see vividly in the bright light of the sun. But we cannot reach a thing in its absolute state. Sunlight can only be mirrored and cause a corresponding image in the mind. There is a one-to-one correspondence between what is illuminated and what is perceived. What is illuminated is the presentative. What is perceived is the representative. They are like the sun and the moon. The sun is self-luminous while the moon has no light. Yet the moon shines because of the reflected light of the sun. This is like *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Without the sun's light, the moon cannot be seen, but for a person to know anything he has to know it from the moon of his mind, from the reflected images which correspond to his perception. Images formed in the mind do not remain independent. Many images are put together to make a meaningful ensemble. By a process of the recall of all relevant memories the mind is feeding itself with appropriate gestalts. Like the sun and moon, illumination and reflection, there has to be a recalled image of memory. This is called *smara*. There can be a thousand associated ideas; out of that only the most relevant one should be taken to understand and appreciate what is going on from moment to moment.

Memory is to be followed by discrimination. The discriminating power of a wise person is symbolized as a swan, *haṁsa*. Ultimately, what is seen or heard, touched, tasted, smelled, or identified through memory and properly discriminated should become a proper object with which to work. Action becomes imperative. Action is attributed to Indra. Thus in the heart the meditator postulates *ravi*, sun; *śitakiraṇa*, moon; Smara, the desire-generating god of recall; *haṁsa*, the power of discriminating truth from untruth; and Śakra or Indra, the god of action. They are represented with the syllables *ha*, *sa*, *ka*, *ha*, *la*.

Life is reaching forward from the alpha of its origination to the omega of its highest realization. The meditator has gone from the *mūlādhāra* to the *anāhata*, the heart center. Now he ascends to the *ājña cakra*, the region between the two eyebrows. One who makes spiritual inquiry from the base foundation of the *mūlādhāra* and rises to the actual living situation appreciated in the heart does not want to lose his search in the mirages of experiences that are colorful, musical and otherwise aesthetically enjoyable. He desires to go beyond all these so he postulates the *ājña*, where, in transcendence or *parā*, he has full control of consciousness. To go from a here-and-now ontological situation to the ever-and-all-filling, one cannot leap as one likes. There are many obligations, many memories, and many desires that are holding on to the individuated consciousness. In the light of being, the process of becoming is to be transmuted into its original state of pure being again. The destroyer of hallucinative impulses is meditated on in the *ājña*, which is situated between the two physical eyes of perception. In other words, the meditator gives up his dependency on the eyes that are looking outward to objects of interest and in their place locates the third eye by which alone the eternal can be envisioned. *Parā* and *mārahara* go together. The certitude of untruth brings the certitude of truth. The Supreme is realized both as what it is and what it is not. These three principles are located in the *ājña* with the symbols *sa*, *ka* and *la*.

To these three sets of syllables posited at the *mūlādhāra*, at the *anāhata* and the *ājña*, that is, at the tip of the spine, the heart center, and the point between the brows, the *mantra hrīṃ* is added. At the *mūlādhāra* it is *ka, e, i, la, hrīṃ*. At the *anāhata* it is *ha, sa, ka, ha, la, hrīṃ*. At the *ājña* it is *sa, ka, la, hrīṃ*.

# *VERSE THIRTY-THREE*

*smaraṃ yoniṃ lakṣmīṃ tritayamidamādau tavamanoḥ*
*nidhāyaike nityē niravadhi mahābhogarasikāḥ*
*bhajanti tvāṃ cintāmaṇi guṇanibadhākṣavalayāḥ*
*śivāgnau juhvantassurabhi ghṛta dhārāhutiśataiḥ*

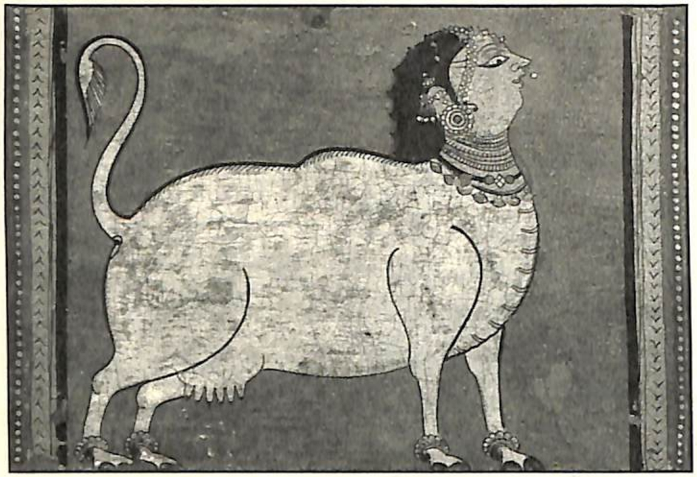
Smara, Yoni, Lakṣmi, prefixing these triads (*aiṃ, hrīṃ, śrīṃ*)
to your *mantra,* O lone and eternal One,
innumerable enjoyers of great ecstasy worship you,
telling rosary stones of perfect reasoning,
ever-sacrificing into the fire of *Śiva* with hundreds of oblations
from the celestial wish-fulfilling cow, Surabhi,
streams of clarified butter.

Man seeks happiness. There is a happiness identical with sensual pleasures. There is a happiness in the intelligent appreciation of correct values, tastefully cultivated. There is also the very rare happiness of transcendence. The lowest pleasures of indulgence lead man to disease or *roga*. Intelligent appreciation brings *bhoga*, an exceedingly pleasurable state. The transcending of pleasures at a gross level and the turning of that energy to the attainment of oneness with the Supreme leads one to perfection and unexpended joy. That is *yoga*. All religions have the concept of a heaven or paradise and a hell or world of miseries. Apart from hell and heaven there is a third possibility, that is, freedom from all relativistic conditioning. That is called liberation, emancipation, or aloneness.

In the human body, there are three main centers of experiencing enjoyment. The lowest is the genital area where one enjoys sexual orgasmic pleasures. The middle region of the heart is another center of great enjoyment. The subtle and sublime aspects of love, compassion, and overwhelming appreciations of beauty are in this region. The topmost region is in the mind where one enjoys the reduction of both the gross and subtle into the appreciation of first principles. Man is both an animal and a god. His main pursuit is after pleasure and the means by which pleasure can be obtained. Most people confuse the means of pleasure with pleasure itself. With wealth one can purchase many pleasures, and to secure pleasures at a future date man hordes wealth. When one goes on hoarding riches, the means transform into an end. In this triangular pursuit three principles are involved: erotics, riches, and the constant remembrance of both. The main programmer of the mind is its preconditionings, which are experienced as a remembrance, *smara*. In the region of the eye one remembers the previous experiencing of beauty. This is followed by a craving to have the repeated enjoyment of what was previously pleasing. The same is true of all the senses and their perceptual enjoyments.

The only organ of action which has similar cravings is the genitals. Before maturity comes, erotic pleasure remains an experience of tactual rapture. The first pleasures of a child are sucking the nipple of its mother's breast and excreting. Afterwards oral erotics and anal erotics become concentrated in the genitals. The anguish and tribulation of adolescence are known to all people. In animals other than humans, sexual pleasures are limited and controlled by natural instinct. Man, however, is the one animal to whom the freedom of sexual pleasure is given to be used at his discretion. Some indulge, others inhibit, and a few intelligently restrain.

In the present verse, we are not considering the yogi of pefection but a *bhogi* who intelligently restrains and sublimates his instinctive urges so that he can be promoted later to the path of higher union. The yogi sits firm on the seat of discipline and looks at his own *svādhiṣṭhāna*, the area where generative pleasures seek overt expression. Three *mantras* are located here. These are three seed *mantras*: "*smara (kāma rāja bīja aiṃ)*; *yoni* (*bhuvaneśvaribīja hrīṃ*); and *lakṣmi* (*śribīja śrīṃ*). *Bhu* is to produce. Some of the lower beings lay a thousand eggs,



Kāma Dhenu *(The Fulfiller of Wishes). Painted wooden manuscript. India. Eighteenth century.*

*According to Hindu mythology, the wish-fulfilling cow emerged from the ocean of milk that was churned by the gods and the demons in their search for the elixir of immortality. The cow with full udders is an auspicious symbol of prosperity.*

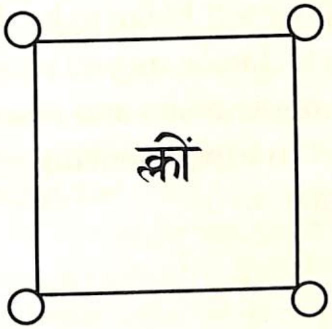
and even a pig may give birth to a score of litters. The human female mostly begets one child at a time, on rare occasions two, three or even four. Month after month the woman is prepared to conceive until fertilization actually happens. Even though rhythms occur in men as well, very few of them are mindful of their sexual rhythms. In most men, sexuality is so chaotic that the urge to impregnate can come at any time. Thus Yoni, the home of *bhuvaneśvari*, is always interested in procreating. Sight, voice, touch, smell are all reminders to have access to the beloved and Smara or remembrance plays a dynamic role. One has to be attractive to be appreciated by one's mate. For that, one aspires to be graceful and Lakṣmi is sought.

The meditator has two choices. One is to get up from his seat and seek an outlet for his sexual urges. The pressure for that can be so intense that a man may even risk his life, riches and reputation and go amuck and rape. The other possibility is for the meditator to sit firmly on his seat with the resolve not to physically indulge but to still enjoy the pleasure of union by bringing the ruling principle of his heart into his Yoni. That means a coalescence is made of the heart region and the genital. This is mainly accomplished by rising from the genital region to the heart region and generating beauty, goodness, and love through the subtle pleasures of life. There can even be overt meditations such as raising a garden of flowers, composing a beautiful poem, creating art forms, or entering into enobling conversations with a loveable person and generating inspirational ideas.

To raise the creative energies from the genitals to the heart, the head also cooperates. There is one danger in Smara and Lakṣmi frequenting the Yoni, the fire of *Śiva* is there. If the fire of *Śiva* is not to burn away Smara and Lakṣmi, that fire should be made into a fire of oblation. The cream of the values of the heart should be turned into the ghee of offering. This verse refers to hundreds of oblations, made with the clarified butter of Surabhi, a mythical cow who can fulfill all desires. Here the meditator departs from the ontological to the nominal. A great poet like Kālidāsa is an example of one who rejoices in the most intense form of sublime erotics. All the main moods of life, *rasas*, are creatively brought out in his play *Śakuntala*. The attraction of the beautiful, the pangs of love, consummation and pregnancy, faithlessness of the lover, rejection and frustration, childbirth and fulfillment, reunion and contentment, and the transcendent state of the peace of the hermits: all are picturesquely produced by Kālidāsa, sitting on the seat of his meditation. A reader passes through this without actually indulging in anything. This is how *cintāmaṇi*, the pearl of perfect reasoning, is brought to bear upon the love to create.

Thus *brahmāgni* of the brain region, *viṣṇuāgni* of the heart region and *śivāgni* of the genital region are all brought together. This is not the highest level but the next closest one. It is customary in the wisdom texts of India that after presenting a lesson of the highest attainment, a following one that is second best is given as an alternative. There is an earthly erotics that pulls one down to the chaos and misery of gross indulgence. And there is a heavenly eros that brings our minds to the portals of a more subtle and deeper appreciation. From here, there is only one step further to go into the transcendence described in the previous verse. *Aiṃ, hrīṃ, śrīṃ.*

*Klīṃ*, within the square *yantra* below, is the *mantra*.



*klīṃ*

## *VERSE THIRTY-FOUR*

*śarīraṃ tvaṃ śaṃbhoḥ śaśimihira vakṣoruhayugaṃ*
*tavātmānaṃ manye bhagavati navātmānamanagham*
*ataḥ śeṣaḥ śeṣītyayamubhaya sādhāraṇatayā*
*sthitaḥ saṃbandho vāṃ samarasaparānandaparayoḥ*

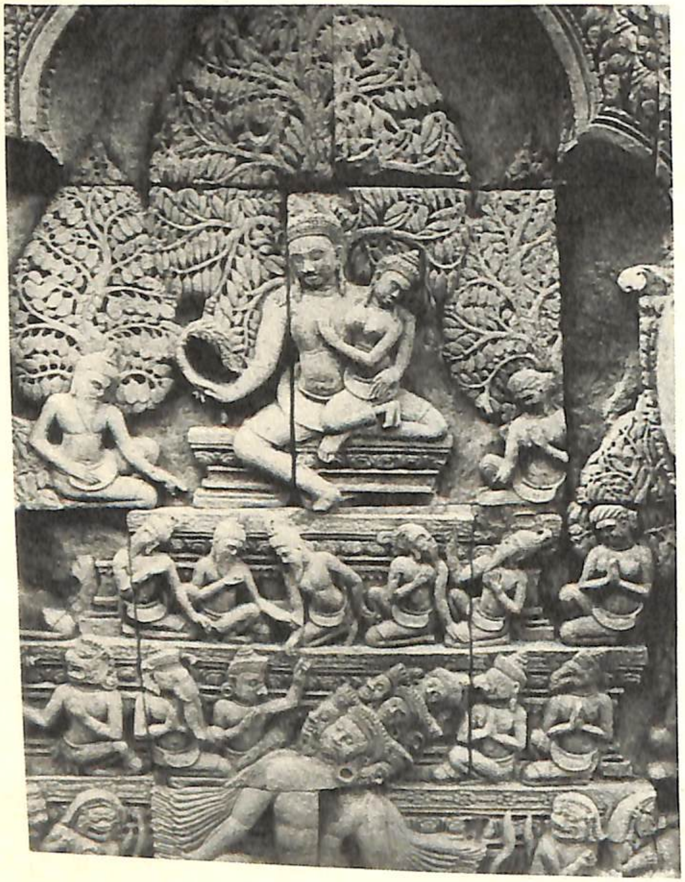
You are the body of Śambhu with the sun and moon
as your twin breasts; your self I take to be the flawless self
of *bhava*, O Blessed Lady; hence, as you reciprocally
realize each other as complements and essence,
this union exists of you two experiencing
supreme bliss with equal savor.

We are embodied persons. A person can open his eyes and see several objects. These objects are the seen and the person is the seer. The person can also look at his hands or legs and other visible parts of the body. Then they are also objects, the seen. Now here a question comes, "Who is the seer and what is the seen?" When a person is seeing his own body objectively, where is the subject? Is there some location in the body where a separate seer is sitting? If the eye is an organ of seeing, is the seer of the eye different from the eye? A philosopher can make abstractions and put a seer behind the eye, a listener behind the ear, but do we experience such a separate entity? We do not. We are not only observing and scanning the outer surface of our body, but we are thinking, reasoning, feeling good or bad. While knowing, thinking and feeling, we also know that we know, think, reason, do, appreciate, and resent. Even subjective ideas are treated as objects of a more subjective core. If both subjective ideas and the witness of subjective ideas are of the nature of consciousness, from where do we obtain distinguishing boundaries for each? We do not know. We only assume that all these are separate entities because we have labelled them meaningfully, circumlimiting logical units of consciousness, and because we think with words. Each word is used as a specifying instrument of a formulated concept within unspecified and unformulated consciousness. So the distinctions are nominal, pertaining to names.

From what is apparently the most external and independent body of matter "out there" to the innermost, self-luminous awareness of "I am," we have a complex situation to reckon with. We are at once a body and spirit, inseparable from each other. Not any bit of what may be called the spirit can stand on its own without a corresponding body aspect to sustain it. Every bodily aspect is to be reduced in terms of conceivable knowledge so that it can be known. Thus in one sense everything is spiritual. It is equally true to say that everything is physical. The *śarīra*, body, and *ātman*, spirit, when taken unitively, are not even interlaced as the warp and woof of a fabric. The division is arbitrary, and yet they are conceivably different.

This is the first idea one comes to when meditating on the complementarity of *Śiva* and *Śakti* as the two phases of his own person. This aspect is *jīvavyūha*. *Vyūha* is an organized state, well ordered, and functionally arranged. When a squad of soldiers are arrayed in a certain manner that is called a *vyūha*. Similarly, the organized person is a *vyūha*. One can think of *Śiva* as the nucleic awareness of that person and *Śakti* as the body. With the same justification one can also think that *Śakti* is the central core and *Śiva* is the manifested person. This verse wants to treat both aspects as interchangeable.

From the day we are born we hear spoken language around us. Unconsciously we relate the sound tokens to many objects around us and also to ideas that are communicated to us through words. Even our pets like cats and dogs understand the language that is spoken to them. Words are structured with consonants and vowels. This is a person's first exercise and training to relate him or herself to everything outside. It is like a magical performance,



Śiva and Pārvati on Mount Kailāsa. *Carved stone. Banteay Srei, Cambodia. 967 A.D.*

reducing the entire world into an internally arranged lexicon of well-coordinated linguistic relationships. Then, in about four or five years, a person has all the essential words very well known so as to use them correctly. This is the first *vyūha* or organized state built around a person, to act as a member of the society to which he belongs. That is called the *kalāvyūha*.

Everything one hears, sees, and experiences is first to be reduced to the ciphers or codes of language, and then for orientation they all are to be referred to a central point where one experiences I-consciousness. The "I" is the reckoner of all the ciphers with which it is fed. That central witness should be able to decipher, then and there, every symbol flashed to it. This central location can be shifted from one center to another in the vertical parameter of the person's knowledge, ranging from the most unconscious to the most conscious, from the most irrational notion to the most rationalized mathematical certitude. That center point governs the *bindu vyūha*. The *bindu* can be located in the six synergic centers of the *mūlādhāra*, the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, the *maṇipūra*, the *anāhata*, the *viśuddhi* and the *ājña*.

An intimate experience of inexpressible ecstasy can be the dominant note of an imperiential impact, and yet the person has no way to extricate himself from the ongoing joyous state and see it objectively. It is real and yet is indescribable in words. When, at the central locus of a person, this most impersonal absorption comes and the boundaries of the person dissolve away, it is a stage of the *parā*. Between the unmodulated and the modulated an envisioning happens which is still of an unconscious state. This is something similar to what is spoken of as the preconscious waiting at the threshold of overt awareness and is called *paśyanti*. Then it finds a medium to burst into a consciously recognizable idea or feeling. It is the *madhyama*. Then, finally, approporiate words are found. A person is speaking to himself from inside. The voice of his own soul, as it were, is heard, spoken by the tongue and listened to by the same person's ear. This is *vaikhari*. This inner manifestation is attributed to the *nāda vyūha*, language organization.

Language is necessary to express one's assent and dissent, pleasure and displeasure, and various kinds of affectation. There is no affectivity without an ego center. A pain-giving or pleasure-giving signal recalls all similar experiences of the past. That enables the individual to accept or reject, to fight or to flee. Thus *ahāmkara*, the assertion of the ego, is tied up with its memories, *citta*. With the help of memories, the true nature of the situation with which one is presented is recognized and identified. This is *buddhi*, the role of the intellect. The judgement that is thus made is in answer to several questions that arise from the mind, *manas*. However psychological or spiritual these experiences look, they cannot manifest without the physical or physio-chemical basis of a body. We may not know the true nature of it in the gross organism before us, but there is a "stuff" out of which everything has come to have a physical status. That is *mahat*. This group of psycho-physical manifestations comes with the *vyūha* called *citta*.

Here we have seen that we are deeply immersed in something unknown to us, and yet the unknown is becoming known through some unknown mechanism of the knowing body-self complex. To know means to assemble consciousness in a certain way and to formulate it in an intelligent manner. This is *savikalpa*. From that one can also go into a state and a person recognizes the incidence of that state only after his or her return to consciousness or *savikalpa*. This is *nirvikalpa*. Both *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* belong to *jñāna vyūha*.

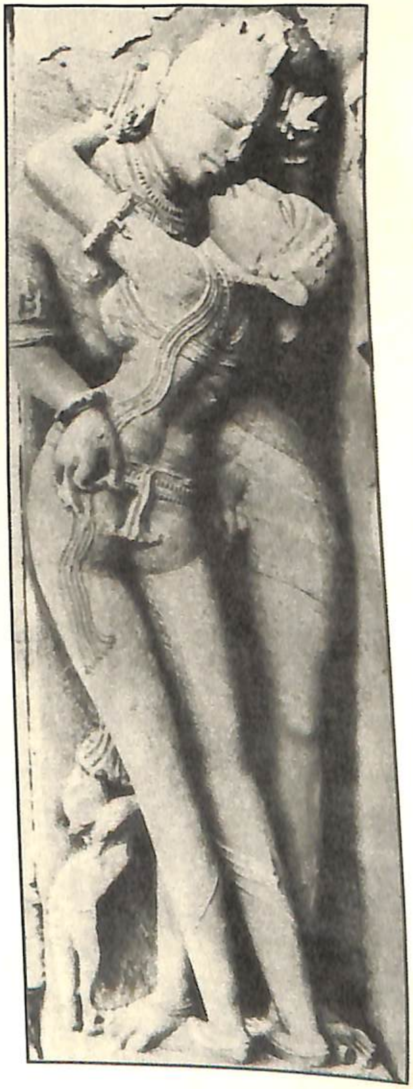
The most mysterious phenomenon is how things are named. A proto-language and a meta-language are being woven into each other. The words of such a language can relate in such a manner that new meanings can be conceived and new names born. More and more experiences mean the generation of more and more names. That word-generating system which operates as the dynamic of eruditon is *nāma vyūha*.

The fact that there are millions of names vouches for the existence of millions of forms. Forms are the most universal and the most unique aids to specification, and that specificity is enhanced with the endless mixing of colors. Thus, a person is placed in a colorful world which is laid out in the vastness of infinite space. This is the *kula vyūha*.

From the time taken for the wink of an eye, to the total dissolution of the entire world at the close of a cycle, all comes within a time span. The time-generating and time-dispensing principle is attributed to *kāla vyūha*.

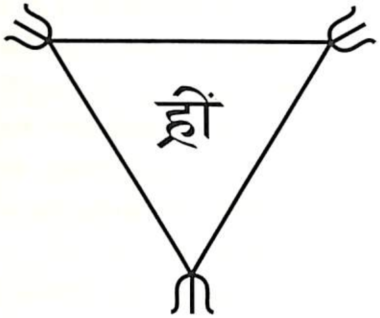
Interlaced Lovers. *Carved stone ornamentation. Temple of Khajurāho. India. Thirteenth century.*

*As embodied lovers,* Śiva *and* Śakti/Pārvati *represent the polar forces of male and female that attract and complement one another. In their embrace, they define one another as "the other". At the same time their union represents the unified reemergence of the individual into the transcendant ground of being.*



These are the nine *vyūhas* which are at once of *Śiva* and of *Śakti*. They are relevant both to the physical world and to the spiritual understanding of it. Thus when all the nine *vyūhas* are meditated upon, one does not turn away from the physical to become spiritual or from the spiritual to become more factual. All dualities cease. One finds his or her own place in the total scheme and resonates with this design as a co-creator and co-evolute.

*Hrīṃ* is placed within a triangle for meditation.



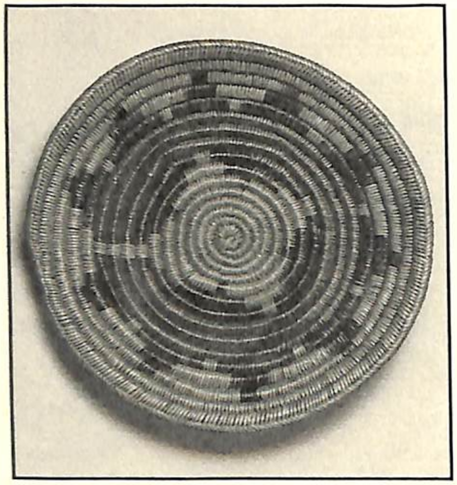
*hrīṃ*

## *VERSE THIRTY-FIVE*

*manastvaṃ vyoma tvaṃ marudasi marutsārathirasi*
*tvamāpastvam bhūmistuayi pariṇatāyām na hi param*
*tvameva svātmānam pariṇamayitum viśvavapuṣā*
*cidānandākāram śivayuvatibhāvena bibhṛṣe*

You are the mind (in the *ājña*), the sky (in the *viśuddhi*),
the wind also (in the *anāhata*), and the charioteer of the winds
(in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*). You are the water (in the *maṇipūra*).
Apart from your manifested form, there is nothing else.
In order to manifest by your own Self, you assume
this form of the universe, this form of blissful consciousness,
and triumphantly rule as the young bride of *Śiva*.

A healthy, creative mind is like a young bride. It is joyous, full of imagination, loving, and desiring to be loved. The bride is full of dreams of a world of her own. There are many things to achieve and many devices to create, and everything is to be organized. She is no longer a child in her parent's home. She has come into her own and is expected to be both the author and authority. With wide-open eyes she looks around and ascertains in her mind whatever is there. She assumes the role of the knower: she knows



Traditional Navaho wedding basket. *Woven and dyed rush. America.*

whatever is fully known and what is yet to be known. Knowledge is arranged in the mind as relevant information that can be pressed into service whenever there is a need. "She" is not an ordinary bride, but a cosmic bride, *śivayuvati*, the absolute, youthful female. Her world of knowledge is basic, that of the knower, knowledge and the known (*jñātī, jñāna, jñēya*). Whatever is known is either here or out there. There is a certitude about it. The bride confidently says, "This is." There is a ring of truth in that statement. It is *satya*, existence. That confidence of pinpointing truth comes from self-founded awareness. It is the knowledge that discovers truth and sustains existence as a reliable factor. It is *cit*. It is no more a dream but an actual, adorable reality, *ānanda*. At her core, the young bride is that pulsating joy. The bliss that wells up in her mind is allowed to flow in all directions. She gives her touch of beauty to everything she handles. She brings order out of chaos and gives color and music to life because her very essence is *cidānanda*, blissful consciousness. Her knowledge is like an instrument, a vehicle, a weapon, and a device. That is her equipment to create. She creates by desiring. She is composed of triple dynamics: the dynamic of knowledge, the dynamic of desire or volition, and the dynamic of creation.

She sits with the wisdom of a third eye in the *ājña*, the synergic center of command. It is from there she gives orders. She is wielding the past, the present and the future of her own world. As sovereign she fashions the future to be a perfect continuation of the present which is the fulfillment of the past. She can easily move from a latent incipent memory to the imagination of a dream and from an imagination to its actualization. She is a consummate artist. The very beauty of her being flows out into colors, forms, and striking meaning: it is this vast universe, with its sky studded with stars, colorful horizons, hills and dales, and flowers and birds. Thus she goes on painting.

This young wife, who is the cosmic mind of creation, is neither dumb nor mute. She is the goddess of words: words of wisdom, purity, and inspiration, words that gladden her own mind and the minds of all. She enters the mansion of truth and plays on her lyre a melody of words. She is in the v*iśuddhi*. From her the wind blows in all directions, overladen with the fragrance of her good will and her song of joy. It is her joy that generates the promise of tomorrow, the impulse to go on, a looking forward to tomorrow. She is the heart of the entire universe, a heart overwhelmed with love and compassion. Such is her unbroken love for the world she is creating around her that she is resolute and determined to save and care for all. She is the *anāhata*.

She likes transparency, whether it is the transparency of clear water, the water of life, or the nourishing sap of a tree. She is life and she is the bringer of life. She waters the seeds of dreams and the minds of creators. Life is essentially composed of changing moods. It is her joy to bring cheer and wash away all depressions. Her very nature is like the billowy waves of sweetest affection, *saundaryalaharī*. Sitting in the *maṇipūra*, the pearl of perfection, she acts as an alchemist, bringing perfection to everything. This is what the cosmic bride wants to achieve in her self-created home that is this world. In order to fashion, mold, purify, and test, she ignites the fire of the *svādhiṣṭhāna*.

Ultimately the stamp of actuality should be laid on everything created. It should be as firm as *terra firma*. Nothing is more actual than the firm ground on which this bride, this cosmic mind of creation, stands. She comes to the very foundation of factual truth, *mūlādhāra*. This is the world of *śivaduti* which is at once gross, subtle, causal and transcendental. It is in that world that she rules as both a joyous wife and mother. She plays in the precincts of that home as her own sweet, innocent daughter because she is Bāla, Lalita, and Rajarajeśvari or the child, the youthful maiden and the Supreme Sovereign Creatrice. *Aum*.

## *VERSE THIRTY-SIX*

*tavājñā cakrasthaṃ tapanaśaśikoṭidyutidharaṃ*
*paraṃ śaṃbhuṃ vande parimilitapārśvaṃ paracitā*
*yamārādhyan bhaktyā raviśaśiśucīnāmaviṣaye*
*nirāloke' loke nivasati hi bhālokabhuvane*

O Mother, I worship Śambhu (*Śiva*),
the Absolute inset in your *ājña cakra,*
which has the radiance of a million suns and moons.
His two sides are illumined by the light of supreme
consciousness. He who worships with devotion
that which is beyond the reach of the lights of sun, moon
and fire, and beyond comprehension, and alone,
lives indeed in the world of the numenon.

There is a fire in the pit of man's stomach which needs fuel. When that fire of hunger is left unquenched, man becomes agitated in his body and mind. Hunger continues to be the most crucial problem of the world's people; it has an eternal status. However much it is appeased, it reappears in a few hours. To win his bread man barters his freedom. In this matter, man is no different from other creatures. There is another fire which makes man even more restless, and its flames are more subtle than those of hunger. This is sex.

The fire of hunger can be appeased with food, but sex is more complex. Its tongues are uncouth and irrational in their discrimination. Man, thus, is caught between these two hell fires of hunger and sex.

Corresponding to the fires of hunger and sex, there is the actual fire which man keeps in his hearth. The kitchen where the mother cooks her broth continues to be the point of return to which every person comes after a day's hard labor. The fire outside and the fire inside obligate man to make a family. Cooking and sharing physical food and love is the common theme of the family. Thus people sit around fire and make the family unit. This was particularly true when our forefathers were hunters and nomads but continues today even if in a more sophisticated way.

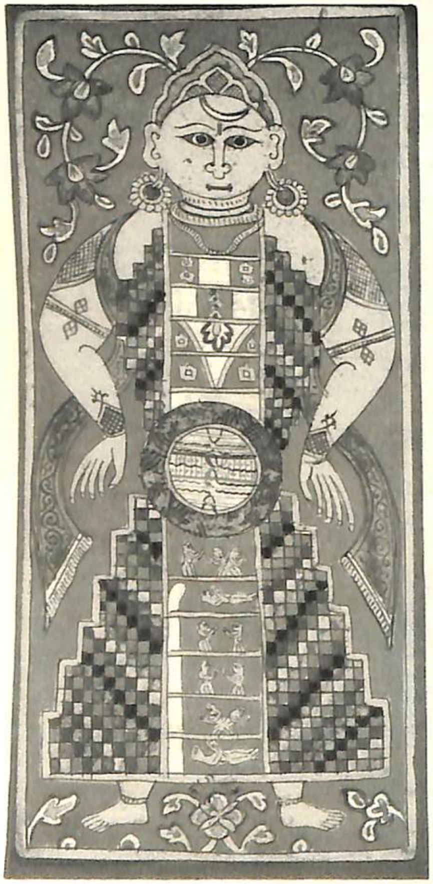
The human body is a crucible where chemical interactions are occuring all the time and where different fires are continually ignited and quenched. A word of love, or even the ghost of a gesture, is enough to evoke an emotional upsurge. The body becomes overheated, the skin burns, and the mouth parches when the agitation of anger or erotics becomes inflamed. Jealousy, bickering, and all such pinpricks also enter into the domain of the irrational fires that dwell in our systems. When these instinctive biological, psychological or even sociological demands produce cross fires or short circuits, it becomes a problem to the mind and immediate solutions are to be found. The *ājña* is the synergic center which presides over life at the conscious level. When that center is not disciplined, an automatic reaction comes as a response to a problem rather than a proper solution being constructed. Thus in our daily lives, most people live at an action-reaction level. Even in the case of disciplined people, there are many conditioned reflexes. Only after their initial reaction of fear or anger do they realize the ugliness of such behavior. The domain of fire is like a family affair. It is mostly lived behind the screen of privacy. The inner smoulderings of people make them alone, desperate and unable to share their private agonies with even their best freinds. Emotional conflagrations come like a brush fire and intelligence is at a loss to quench them.

In the course of social evolution humans have learned to appreciate truth revealed by the light of the sun. At night the stump of a tree may look like a ghost though in broad daylight it reveals itself to be only a stump. Through the clarity of light man freed himself of many of the superstitions which kept him in a barbaric state. Public education is like bringing a little of the sun into each life. When knowledge is standardized as common and scientifically verifiable, many answers to the problems that are created by the fires of hunger, sex and other instinctive urges are resolved. But everything in man cannot be laid on the table to be scrutinized in the light of scientific inquiry. Even the best scientist has his own personal problems of a very subtle nature that cannot be shared. In the domains of fire and sun, people share many things with each other, and yet, in a serious way, they are alone. They cannot put their total trust in another because our instincts are not the same and are not of the same intensity or quality. The conditionings of our intelligences are different, as are the varieties of information we receive.

There is another light available to people which is not as hot as fire nor as intense as sunlight, the gentle light of the moon. Even when the sun illuminates the external world, men and women bask in the sheen of the moonlight of their minds. God may be creating the world outside, but man as an individual, has to forge all the necessary concepts to identify every percept presented to him. Conceptualization and ideation are always going on in the lunar sphere of his mind. This area is also fraught with tragic elements. The effects of sun and fire are more tangible that those of the moon. Thoughts can drug the persona. Imaginations can go wild and the whirlpool of imagination catches the individual in the snare of another kind of loneliness. Persons, events, and places are all generated within oneself. Even the need to relate with other people is negated, and man snares himself in the worst kind of narcissistic withdrawal. The havoc is recognized only when it becomes obviously pathological.

Cosmic Man. *From a* Samgrahanisūtra *(Jain cosmological text). India. 1604.*

*In many Indian philosophical and artistic traditions the physical body is seen as an archetypal ground of connection between the inner psychic world and the outer macrocosm, and it is used as a broad canvas on which to paint various cosmological manifestations.*



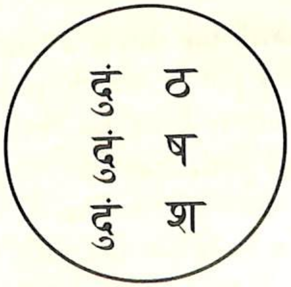
In all these matters, the individual consciousness placed in the *ājña* is governing our life. The execution of this charge cannot be given to a proxy. Unfortunately, most people are inefficient in carrying out their own self-government. They live in despair, in constant agitation, and with a sense of helplessness. Either they sit and cry or they shriek and shout in desperation. This is the tragic drama of life which we live in our arena illuminated by the sun and moon and fire. The face of truth is hidden by a golden disk and a hallucinatory trickster is interfering at every step. Hence, the prayer in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* to remove the golden disk that veils the face of truth.

When there is a silver lining on the edge of a cloud, it indicates that the sun is behind it. Similarly, behind this phenomenal show of fantasy, there shines Śambhu, the bringer of peace, joy and harmony. As we tire ourselves with the countless problems of everyday life, we do not even suspect that there is a way out. It is actually not a way out but a way in. It is cutting through both spiritualism and materialism. Śambhu is to be meditated upon: the numenon that surpasses the brilliance of millions of suns and moons cannot be comprehended with the mind conditioned by instincts, rational reasoning, or imagination. With mystic zeal one has to make a breakthrough. It is like entering into a pilgrimage of the alone to the Alone. It is said to be a world which fire and moon and sun cannot reach.

It may sound like the world of truth is very far. In fact, it is nearer than the throb of one's own heart. In this verse it is said that Śambhu is right where our consciousness is felt in the *ājña*. We are familiar with the wakeful, the dream and deep sleep states of consciousness, and yet there is also a fourth state, the transcendental. You cannot break open the portals of the transcendental just as you cannot unfurl the petals of a bud with force. One has to be patient. The highest truth dawns from within, but not to the lazy one who pins his faith to fate but to him or her who is vigilant. Jesus Christ describes this as brides sitting in the bridal chamber in a sleepless watch with their midnight lamps burning. This is an endeavor and an effort which are different from striving for success in the world of transactions. There is an earnestness to seek and find. It is not the restless agitation of an undisciplined mind. It is a very, very gentle inward pacing without expectations.

When the mind is cluttered with prefabricated ideas of truth, we stumble on the idiotic creations of our own imaginations. The only advice that can be given is: "Have faith in the benevolence of your creator. Have patience. Make your search genuinely loveful. Show the same patience to what is revealed by the light of fire, the light of the sun and the light of the moon. Prepare yourself to be a worthy receptacle to hold the most precious gift of the Divine." Then peace comes. *Śam* is peace and *Śambhu* is the generating of peace. Let peace prevail. *Aum śānti.*

Four *mantras, duṃ, ṭha, ṣa, śa,* are arranged within a circle for this verse.



*duṃ, ṭha, ṣa, śa*

## *VERSE THIRTY-SEVEN*

*viśuddhau te śuddha sphaṭika viśadaṃ vyomajanakaṃ*
*śivaṃ seve devīmapi śivasamānavyavasitām*
*yayoḥ kāntyā yāntyāḥ śaśikiraṇaśarūpya saraṇeḥ*
*vidhūtāntardhvāntā vilasati cakorīva jagatī*

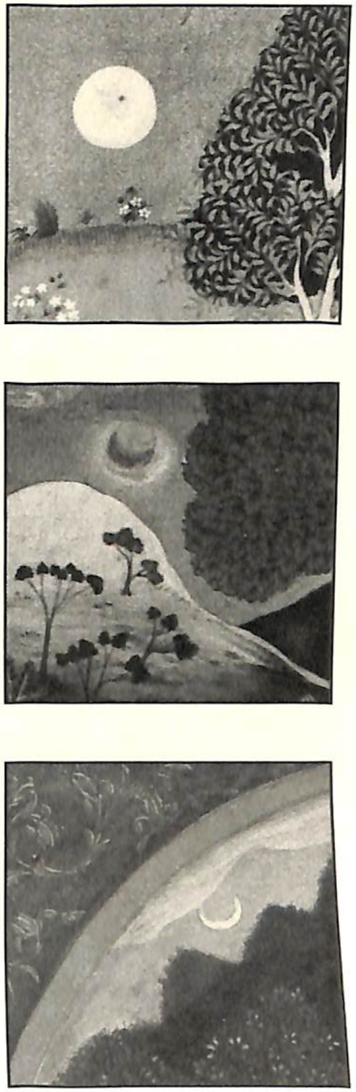
In your *viśuddhi cakra*, crystal clear and sky-generating,
I adore *Śiva*, and *Śakti* who has equality with *Śiva*.
There is a combined streaming of the lovely splendor
of this couple which travels like a course of moonbeams.
The world, basking in that light, seems like a cakora bird
with her inner darkness dispelled.

To the earth the sun is a harsh task master. All day her children are put to strenuous work. In the night, the moon comes as a dear lover, fondles all, and puts them to a restful sleep filled with dreams. These alternating aspects of the outgoing working mind and inward flowing contemplation are shared by all. In Christian religious life, piety is alternated with works. In Hinduism the same pairing is called *jñāna* and *karma*. In each instance both aspects are governed by the same godhood. The main theme is the coming together of a lover and a beloved, like *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Between two people there can exist distance, strangeness, even hatred. There is also the possibility of closeness, intimacy and union in love. Thus there is a wide area to cover with transactions. Most transactions happen through the exchange of words. Words come from the *viśuddhi* or throat center. In word and voice culturing, education and socialization play a great part. Words can be used to express truth in clear terms. They can also be used as masks and for the purposes of deceit and betrayal. Thus truth and untruth have their currency of real and counterfeit in word circulation.

For this reason a spiritual person is expected to bring purity to the word-generating *ākāśa* of his vocal system. *Nāda* or sound is said to be the quality of *ākāśa* or ether. *Ākāśa* also is the first of the five elements and donates space for each separate body to exist. Interaction is going on on all sides. Transaction is called vy*avasāya*. In interpersonal and transpersonal transactions the *vyavasāya*, the act of transacting, is aided by both *Śiva* and *Śakti*. The light of the spirit pairs with the physical body-mind complex, and so *Śiva* and *Śakti* are both to be seen in the *viśuddhi*, throat plex, the source of words.

When two people are enticed by mutual attraction and they come together, they begin their transaction in silence. They are unable to find appropriate words. When they slowly enter into conversation, a number of instincts are evoked. Is the other a friend or an enemy? Both suspect. Walls and trenches are to be created between them in case the other turns malevolent. Words are fired with the intention of winning the other from a safe angle. Motives can be suspected. Every word can arouse suspicion. A word said inadvertently can bring fear and frustration. Thus there is much darkness generated in the sky of friendship. A dialogue begun in good spirit soon ends in a fight. Words can be man's best friends and his worst enemies. But when love distills through all these obstacles and finally reaches the other's soul, words are no longer of any use. One look in the eye is enough. Love can speak without any word and can open up one's entire soul to the other. That is presented here as *śuddha sphaṭika viśadam*, a crystal clear expanse. Where there is crystal clear clarity in the word context, that alone is *viśuddhi*.

In spiritual *sādhana*, or striving, it is very important to be absolutely truthful both in word and intent. In the *viśuddhi* dwell *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Propitiation given to them is given to the adorable truth. Indian poets thought that the classical approach in love should be that of a female partridge, cakora, enjoying the moonlight. There is no hard labor here. To move out of the dark



Moons and suns from Indian paintings.

*top:* Cowgirls searching for Kṛṣṇa. *Mewar, ca. 1730.*

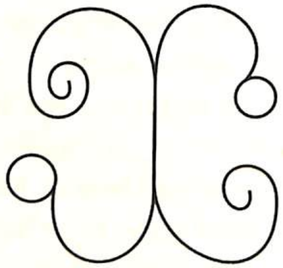
*center:* Sohini swimming to meet Mahinwal. *Bundi, ca. 1790.*

*bottom:* At a shrine to Śiva. *By Fateh Chand. Mughal, ca. 1735.*

shadow of the jungle into the moonlight is all that is expected of a cakora. Similarly, the lover allows himself or herself to be carried away by the attraction of love. Under the moon, everything looks as if it is dissolving in the light, and the cakora bird itself dissolves in moonlight. There is no ego. There is no holding out. There is nothing to establish. There is simply being and remaining in the gentlest of embraces. Nothing is more dear to a person than the Self and the greatest of all beloveds is the Supreme Self. In the present case the Supreme Self is located in the *viśuddhi* as *Śiva* and *Śakti*, the archetypal lover and beloved. We return to our source and merge with them in the mutual embrace in their union.

Sri Ramakrishna describes this union in many ways. He says it is like hungry people going for a country feast. Until the delicious meal is served to them they make a lot of noise, but once they settle down to eat they go into silence. Occasionally one may hear a sound of exclamation as they enjoy their meal. Similarly, when drawn to the beloved, one begins with words of praise, singing hymns and making supplications. That is the *vaikhari*. Then one gets into the ecstatic states of *madhyama* which promote spiritual envisioning, *paśyanti*. Ultimately, everything is forgotten in the beatitude of love, reaching *parā*. This is the wonder of going from words to silence and from anguish to ecstasy in the experiencing of love. Devotion to God is the ultimate love.

*Ra* is meditated upon within the following *yantra*.



र

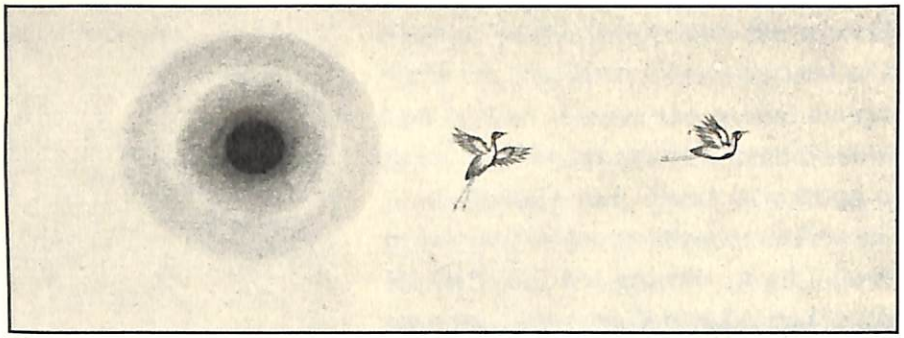
*ra*

# *VERSE THIRTY-EIGHT*

*samunmīlat saṃvit kamala makarandaika rasikaṃ*
*bhaje haṃsadvandvaṃ kim api mahatām mānasacaram*
*yadālāpādaṣṭādaśaguṇita vidyā pariṇatiḥ*
*yadādatte doṣād guṇamakhilam adbhyaḥ paya iva*

I meditate on those two swans, *haṁsas*, who delight
in partaking of the nectar of the lotuses of knowledge,
blossoming within the consciousness of certain great souls
who are used to dwelling in the lake of *mānasa*.
It is as a result of their elaboration that the maturation
of the eighteen arts takes place, freed from dross,
their goodness extracted like milk from water.

The here and now is inset in the eternal that is lived everywhere. Our eyes are small, and the organ of sight is tucked into the brain in the mystery of its grey matter. In it is mirrored the vast universe, like a world in its entirety reflected in a dewdrop. The outgoing senses are in intimate relationship with an all-deciphering mind. The worlds of perception and of reflection are like two comrades, like two swans living in the same lake, feeding on the honey of the same lotus. Or they are like two birds sitting on the same tree



Haṁsa *from the Indian painting* Lady yearning for her lover. *Bundi. About 1780.*

eating sweet and nourishing fruits. Whatever the senses perceive, our mind interprets. Whatever the mind conceives, the senses identify. Thus we are the two swans swimming in the lake of consciousness, two birds living on the tree of life.

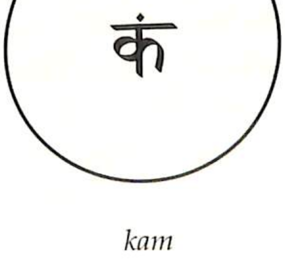
Every science has its complementary technology. Knowledge and action go hand in hand. We are brought to the school of life to derive from it both the lessons of the tangible and the wisdom that transcends the subject and its objectives. This hour can be an hour of peace and joy. It can also be an hour of horror and disgust. We can see in our neighborhood examples of both the tragedy and comedy of life enacted side by side. Nobody likes to live in anger and shame, pain and misery. Everyone at heart seeks quiet and peace and the joy that surpasses comprehension.

Those who are committed to this life have a duty to bring to every yearning heart the gospel of peace and joy. Long ago, seeing the misery of this world, its famine and poverty, disease and pestilence, old age and death, and plaguing injustice in society, a young prince renounced his sceptor and became a wayfarer in order to seek redemption for the world. He sifted truth from untruth, the perennial from the transient, and preached to the world the *dharma* of blessedness. Prince Siddartha became the Blessed Buddha, the Fully Awakened One. Similarly, a prophet of the wilderness appeared on the banks of the Jordan river. He called people to walk from darkness to light, to shake off their evils and live in piety. He baptized people in the river. There came to him Jesus of Nazareth, innocent and guileless, who received his baptism in the river from this prophet John. In Jesus, God was pleased. From above God descended upon him as pure spirit and assigned to him the role of the Savior.

Seeking, aspiration, and descending grace have not ceased. They continue even today. You are another one who is seeking. And you will also be a recipient of the same grace. The two swans of the lake, the two birds of the tree of life, are the man and God in us who are an inseparable pair. From one comes free will and from the other its execution. The kingdom of God is compared to the wisdom of a farmer who gathers both chaff and grain and then sifts them meticulously in the wind. He burns the chaff and keeps the grain in his barn. This is to be our daily routine. Through the doors of perception we receive a million images. Some are real and some are unreal. Swans are reputed to separate milk from water. Even so, in our daily life, we have to separate truth from untruth, the eternal from the fleeting, virtues from evils and light from darkness. The heart and the head are like two eyes, one to see truth and the other to see goodness. One has to learn how to be pleased with truth and to desire only the desirable. Thus we have an emotional life to complement our intelligence.

To equip ourselves with the wisdom to live beautifully, we have evolved the eighteen arts of life. From the depth of our silence there arises the unspoken word which has within it both a will and a vision. The envisioned word assumes form and then becomes utterable. The spoken word passes from the speaker to the listener and from the teacher to the pupil. The word has the power to announce the path. It has the dynamics to persuade all to go from where they are to the chosen goal. It is from the word that both light and life come. Life has needs to be fulfilled and freedom to enjoy. Therefore nine sets of arts are conceived for the fulfillment of needs and nine to transport man from the rigid world of needs to the heaven of freedom. For example, man needs a shelter over his head. Even the simplest hut which man makes implies in it the art of architecture. It is developed into the highest expression of beauty when people construct a temple to God, such as the Cathedral of Chartres. The cathedral is not a place to cook food, beget children or groom the family. It is there only for people to gather in friendship and worship the Unknown. Thus from need to freedom man develops the art of architecture. Utility blends with beauty. In and around us we can see the entire culture of the world as a composition of the physical and the spiritual, the real and the factual, coming together like the two hands of God creating the beautiful to glorify the supreme intelligence which is at once the Word and God. *Aum.*

Placed within a circle is the single *mantra kam* for meditation.



*kam*

## *VERSE THIRTY-NINE*

*tava svādiṣṭhāne hutavahamadhiṣṭhāya nirataṃ*
*tamiḍe saṃvartaṃ janani mahatīṃ tāṃcasamayām*
*yadāloke lokān dahati mahati krodha kalite*
*dayārdrā ya dṛṣṭiḥ śiśiramupacāram racayati*

O Mother, I praise you, placing in your *svādhiṣṭhāna*
the fire of sacrifice, ever looking upon it as the great fire
of doom and also placing *samaya* there, so that
when the worlds are burning in his mighty stir of anger,
your glance permeated with pity renders the world
the cooling touch of early spring.

We live and die in the mystery of an unresolvable paradox. We wake up in the morning only to go to sleep in the evening. We breathe in to breathe out. We tastefully cook our food and eat it with relish, and then we excrete it as dirt. Strangers meet in fear and suspicion. These attitudes change into friendship and comradery. Friendship goes sour, and people who have been living in intimate relation for several years get on each other's nerves and find it so difficult to tolerate the other's presence. This riddle is to be faced in one's own personal foundation of life. In Sanskrit such a foundation is called *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The truth of a fabric comes from the threads that go into it as the warp and woof. The truth of the thread is in the fibers with which the yarn is made. The truth of the fiber is in the molecular arrangement of the material of the fiber. Thus it goes, *ad infinitum*. There is always a foundation and an apparent superimposition.

The two edges of the problem are life and death. We are said to be living when we breathe. Breath has energy in it. The yogis speak of five-fold energies or *prāṇas*. The intaking breath is called *prāṇa*, and the outgoing breath is *apāna*. Respiration is happening between the two extreme points of intake and output. Thus, in everything connected with life, there are opposites. Love generates hatred; hatred generates love. The transformation of one into the other is hard to discern. Like right and left, diastole and systole, and positive and negative, the creative principle and the annihilative principle are paired. In the *svādhiṣṭhāna* or the genital region the meditator is worshipping the creative Mother and the destroying Father.

Fire is the best symbol to represent life and death, and like entropy and negentropy there has to be the balancing of fire in the *prāṇa*. Life begins with the commencement of respiration and ends with its cessation. The start of respiration or inhalation is *prāṇa*. Before its complete extension comes, a flushing out of *prāṇa* rhythmically comes in the form of *apāna*. The last and final expulsion is *udāna*. Thus *apāna* is actually playing only a minor and representative role for *udāna*. The real polarization is between *prāṇa* and *udāna*. For the cancellation of opposite tendencies which occur in the breathing organism of the body, two other varieties of *prāṇas* are postulated, *vyāna* and *samāna*. Every cell in the body, filled with *prāṇa*, should be sucked away through the exhaust of *apāna*. The points of conjunction of *prāṇa* and *apāna* are where the *vyānas* are located throughout the entire body. In fact, they are the body. Energy is to be equally distributed and that role is given to *samāna*. The *svādhiṣṭhāna* can be looked upon as a major control area for incoming and outgoing energy.

Two processes of burning are to be conceived. One is from moment to moment, and the other is a burning that leads to a final cessation. This can be understood by taking the example of a burning candle. At every given moment the candle has a flame. The flame of the previous moment is and is not the flame of the present moment. It is as if the flames of all the passing moments of a candle come under one series. That series closes with the burning out of the entire candle. Even larger "candles" like the stars burn out into extinction. In this verse there is the sacrificial fire in which a person is offering his energy day after day to accomplish his daily goals; ultimately then he has no more fuel to burn and comes to cessation. That fire which burns him out is also the same fire that burns stars into total dissipation. *Rudra Śiva* is postulated as this fire of doom.

Every person born as male or female knows the fire of the genitals. A casual look, a momentary touch or a single word is enough to trigger the fire of passion. The creative mother is like an explosive in the genital area. A sacrificer, a sacrifice and the receiver of sacrifice are introduced through that vulnerable look or touch. The sperm-bearing male is agitated. He becomes a priest to enter into a ritualistic worship of the female genital. She in turn becomes a sacrificial pit of glowing embers, ready to accept the oblation of the male semen. At the commencement of coitus, a man clings to his woman as as though he cannot part from her for all eternity. He is infused with her *prāṇa* and she is infused with his. Then *apāna* finally flushes him out. His intwining arms go loose. He no longer wants to hold her and may even get up and walk away in disgust. The Mother creates in love and the Father destroys in remorse.

The seed cast into the sacrificial pit of the mother's genital is sucked into the womb and carefully sealed in her own egg. There is an immortal element in the life-bearing spirit, but the hand of destruction is there also. That uni-cell is cut into two. The divided cells assume autonomy. The mother goes on organizing the proliferated cells into the organism of a fully functional person. When the womb which gave protection to the fetus cannot hold the child inside any longer, *apāna* gives the last push and the child is out of the mother. A child coming into the world comes with an open mouth of hunger, ready to devour everything. All vegetation and all animal species are mercilessly chopped, cooked and swallowed. A number of years go that way, in which the main business of the living person is to devour life. And then one day he or she is also finished with and changed into compost, food for others. Thus life goes into death and death resurrects back into life.

What is happening in a small way to the living beings on earth can and will happen to the starry heavens. Our planets are mud pieces. They will break and dissipate. The Supreme Lord, father of destruction, is victorious in pulverizing the entire cosmos. This annihilation is done with the full consent and aid of the Supreme Mother of compassion. She allows her lord to clear the board but she never forgets her motherhood. Joyously, sportively, all the worlds dispersed into indiscernible energy will spiral back into galaxies and stars, planets and life forms. Such is the grand drama that is meditated upon in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Father is Mother and Mother is Father. Sons and daughters are born only to be fathers and mothers. This is the ongoing game that spells a wonder that never ceases.

For meditation the following *mantras* of *ṭham, pam, paḥ, ṣam,* and *sam* are located within this rectangular *yantra*.

ठं पं पः
षं सं

*ṭham, pam, paḥ, ṣam, sam*

# *VERSE FORTY*

*taṭitvantaṃ śaktyā timiraparipanthisphuraṇayā*
*sphuran nānā ratnābharaṇa pariṇaddhendranuṣam*
*tava śyāmaṃ meghaṃ kamapi maṇipūraika śaraṇaṃ*
*niṣeve varṣantaṃ haramihirataptam tribhuvanam*

I worship that Paśupati coupled with you, *Śakti*,
residing in the *maṇipūra* as a dark cloud traversed by
forceful lightning which banishes all darkness
and armed with Indra's bow decorated with jewels
and studded with respendent precious stones.
The three worlds burnt to ashes by the scorching sun of Hara
are cooled with your rain.

When the fetus is in the uterus, the growing child does not see anything and does not hear anything. It does not breath nor does it eat. It has no separate consciousness. However, it is provided with vital energies from the mother's breath and with the nourishment which the mother takes. It receives everything to sustain life through its umbilical cord. Until it is detached, the child is part of the mother. The *maṇipūra* is located where the umbilical cord once was. It is the region set between the genitals, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, and the heart, *anāhata*. The most secretive functions of body metabolism are happening in this region. Various fires and waters mix as if in alchemy and shape a body keeping it continuously nourished and replenished. Everything swallowed in the form of food is burned and split into minute fragments. Its essence is distilled to feed every cell. If the entire body is considered a farmer's field, it is as if irrigated with life-giving rain. Therefore, the father and mother of life are conceived of as a rain-bearing cloud residing in the *maṇipūra*.

Varied functions are allotted to this region. The hunger of need and the satisfaction of appeasement are both experienced here. All parts of the body are activated to obtain food, clothing, shelter, and the security of the family. The fire in the *maṇipūra* is like a sacrificial fire. It can never be quenched. Every day it is to be fueled. Whatever is given is consumed and again more is requested. The ongoing interest in life is kept alive by the all-consuming *maṇipūra*. Two different kinds of needs are prompting to find fulfillment. One from below the *maṇipūra* comes in the form of irrational erotics located in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The other is coming from the *anāhata*, the smouldering heart.

A situation can be taken to understand this phenomena. A young woman's erotic passion is aroused when she is close to her spouse. She feels like she is burning in the fire of her sexual desire. It is as if she is cast into the flames of the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Soon she becomes pregnant. Now the fire in the genital area becomes subdued. But another fire is lit in the heart. With all her expectations she cannot take her mind off the child growing within her. She is puzzled about how the child will look, what gender it will be, how it should be named, how it will be educated, to what goal it should be set, will the father be faithful, how to keep him amused. A kind of rivalry between the father and the child is felt. These are the pangs of the heart. The *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipūra* and *anānhata* are all in a vertical line. Here the mind goes up and down. Only part of it is in the conscious sphere. Most of these things are happening in the dark.

From where do erotics come? Why are they so compulsive? Why does it change its face into attraction and repulsion? What causes the ambivalence of love and hate? Only the tip of the iceberg is seen. The rest is steeped in mystery. What is happening to the food that is taken? How is it split into salts and acids, proteins and vitamins? Who is carrying the essences to replenish the bone cells, the brain cells, the nerve cells? In spite of a person's total ignorance about all these things, there is some benevolent agency sittting in

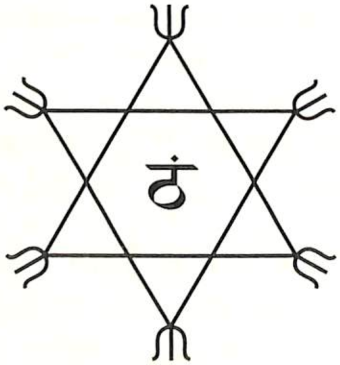
Rain clouds. *Ootacamaṇḍala, Nilgiris Hills, India.*

the *maṇipūra* which has perfect knowledge of all the bodily needs, and everything is taken care of as though life has a secret manager.

When a farmer sows his seeds and waits for rain, how does a cloud come and rain on his farm? Not a single farmer is brought to disappointment. The distribution of clouds is so perfect that everyone gets his quota. Similarly, the cloud of *maṇipūra* is a great friend. It is the domain of both the father and mother of life. So the meditator brings his mind to dwell in this region of light. It is called *andhatāmiśram*, all dark, with the flickering of lights here and there. The benevolence of life comes like a grace. The more one knows the grace he receives, the brighter one's understanding becomes. The lightning that comes in pitch darkness is short lived, but that enables the tired traveler to see his immediate next step. The lightning comes again and again and again.

Our daily sustenance is like that. In this otherwise dark world, hope comes, good comes and help comes, all like flickering lights. We do not know the source but we know it is there. Through experience, faith increases. When a day is hot and humid, we know rain will come and cool everything. And it does come. This is so symbolic of the two fires of the libido and our higher aspirations. The heart is again and again gladdened with the rainbows of aesthetic nourishment. Subliminal neeeds are also met with a rhythmic regularity. Thus the *maṇipūra*, placed between the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and the *anānhata*, is the great fulfiller of life. Faith and grace are its two wings. In the present verse we are not on the ascendency. Balancing on these wings we are slowly descending to touch the *terra firma*. The final secrets are to be unravalled in the *mūlādhāra*, the base foundation. It is a marvel that within us we can discover the most secret generation of beauty and goodness.

*Ṭham* is placed within two interlocking triangles.



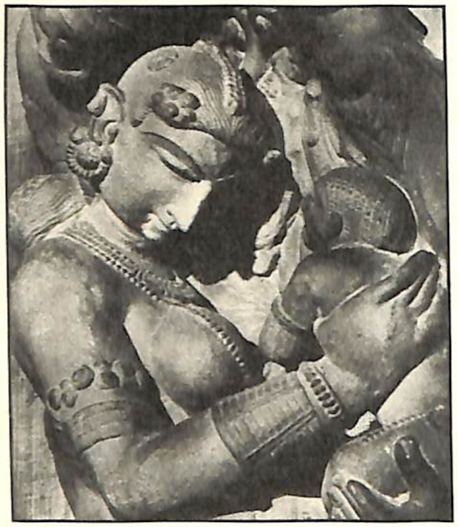
*ṭham*

# VERSE FORTY-ONE

*tavādhāre mūle saha samayayā lāsya parayā*
*navātmānaṃ mane navarasamahātāṇḍavanaṭam*
*ubhābhyām etābhyām udaya vidhimuddiśya dayayā*
*sanāthābhyāṃ jajñe janaka jananīmajjagadidam*

I meditate on your new Self, placed in your *mūlādhāra*
together with Samaya, given to her *lāsya* dance
and also that great *tāṇḍava* dancer.
Giving expression thereby to all nine aesthetic interests,
thus by their joint lordship, by mercy intending
the rebirth of the world, they confer on it
the renewed status of having both father and mother.

A virgin becomes a bride. With the blessings and prayers of all loving persons around, she enters into wedlock. She enters the nuptial chamber and cannot any longer think of herself as what she was until that day. It is as if one more soul has entered her heart. She cannot decide which of the two selves is dearer to her. She loves herself with the same intimacy as she loves her beloved. This is true for the bridegroom also. Thereafter, what she chooses is that which will bring delight to both. From then on she has to



The goddess as a nursing mother. *Stone scupture. Orissa, India. Eleventh century.*

*The full breasts of a mother represent the abundant benificence of the world, personified as the maternal goddess.*

remember for herself and for her spouse as well. She should both give and take decisions and all her decisions are to be endorsed. Her spouse should agree only if she agrees. This is the magic circle of wedlock. She may go through so many chores of the day and her husband will run around on a hundred errands. But she never leaves him, and he cannot put her out of his mind, even for a moment. The world around them is a stage set for them to dance. The music of her jingling bangles can be as much of an inspiration for her lover to take her hand and pace steps with her as the music of the spheres which makes the entire world dance. Their dance is not an exposition. It is a tremor in the heart. Sometimes they leap into the air. She loves continuity. He loves serialized items of performance. Her dance is *lāsya* and his *tāṇḍava*. *Lāsya* means to be half merged with the background and half held out in expression. It is like the gentle dance of a candle flame in a windless room. Or it can be compared to a half-bloomed lotus flower enraptured by the rays of the morning sun, gently swayed by the ripples of the lake where she stands. Or it can be likened to the waxing of a moon from a crescent shape to that of the full moon. Such is the beauty of the *lāsya* dance.

His dance is different. If she is like a melody, he is like percussion and rhythm. The *tāṇḍava* suggests quick steps, violent motions, and leaps across the stage. It can be likened to a conflagration of fire, swept in all directions by a whirlwind. Or it can be likened to the mad onrush of a frenzied bumblebee that is struggling to reach the honey from a lotus flower. She is patient. He is hasty. Thus with full complementarity their courtship progresses.

She becomes pregnant. Now her beloved is doubly within her. She fathers the essences of the look, the moods, the tastes, the voice, the talents and all the virtues of her husband and feeds them into the child that is growing in her. Now her husband is outside as a physical companion and inside as the source of her immaculate joy and wonder. From the time of conception she begins her vigilance. A third dimension is added on to her. The first dimension was that of the virgin, the second that of the wife and the third is that of the mother. She sits introverted as if in continuous meditation. On seeing the withdrawn eyes and passive mood of the young wife, her husband knows that she is drawn to his essence and that he is growing within her.

The newborn has both parents looking on with awe and expectation. Two people who were all by themselves, looking at each other in wonder and amazement at how they became united, afterwards find it incredible to see a

Naṭarāja, the King of Dance. *Traditional Indian Bronze Sculpture.*

Śiva *as the god of destruction and creation dances the world into being and nothingness, again and again, as he forcefully stamps out the rhythm of the* tāṇḍava *dance. His earthbound foot holds down the dwarf of the selfish ego while one of his hands is held in the* mudrā *of benediction, the second in the gesture of wisdom. His other hands hold a bowl of fire, which represents the blaze of wisdom, and a tiny drum which symbolizes the voice that speaks forth from that fire.*

third person lying with them on the same bed, who is like both of them and yet different. The child has a separate identity, a personality of his or her own. Out of nothing, a third person has come. What difference is there between God, the creator of the universe, and these gods who have brought a fully fashioned human being out of their loins? The cow and bull do it. The rooster and the hen also do it. Every species of beings is always engaged in the eternal dance of creation.

There is always a numerator "he" and a denominator "she". There is action which can be pacific or violent, or thoughts which can be gentle in meditation or violent in willful determination. When we look into the *mūlādhāra*, the source from where the fountain of life erupts, it is like the dance of one pair, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, mirrored in a million life forms. The spirit of dance is *anānda*, joy. A loving couple looking into each other's eyes are enthralled with inexpressible happiness. To enhance the thrill of their joyous spirit they reach out to each other, holding together in an embrace called *ānanda bhairava*, the rejoicer in bliss, and *ānanda bhairavi*, the rejoiceress in bliss. They have several forms. They sit as birds on the branch of a tree and rub their beaks and chirp in joy. They may appear as slugs, as bugs, or as any animal of the air, earth or water.

When did this sport begin? From the very dawn of life. Billions and billions of years ago, the same father and mother multiplied through their progeny and are still sitting with them with the same care. Our physical fathers and mothers will die, but the divine father and mother are always watching over us, caring for us every moment of our life. It is no wonder that they are, since God is love.

*Aum śantiḥ śantiḥ śantiḥ.*

ॐ

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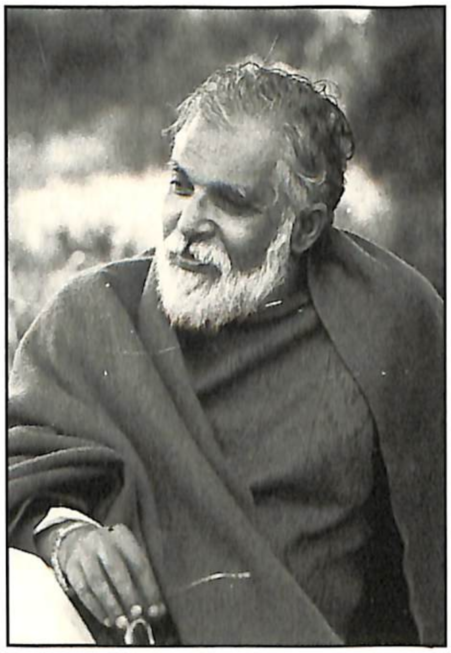
# The Saundaryalaharī

A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY ON THE ĀNANDALAHARĪ

BY

Nitya Chaitanya Yati

A tenth-century hymn to Devī, the Divine Goddess, the *Saundaryalaharī* is a poetic restatement by the philosopher Śankarācārya of his strict *Advaita Vedānta* monism. In a compelling series of verses, Śankara draws in many strands of India's heritage–from mythology, folklore, and from the schools of Tantra, Yoga and Vedānta–and braids them into a vision of luminous, transcendent Beauty.



Nitya Chaitanya Yati was born in 1924 into a family of scholars and poets in Kerala State, South India. He is in the spiritual hierarchy of the mystic Narayana Guru and is a direct disciple of Nataraja Guru. Guru Nitya is head of the Narayana Gurukula, a world-wide contemplative fraternity, and of the East-West University of *Brahmāvidyā*. In his youth Guru Nitya spent eight years as a wandering mendicant, studying with traditional teachers from a variety of spiritual traditions. As a scholar of philosophy and psychology, Guru Nitya has been a professor at colleges throughout India; in addition he has traveled and taught in Europe, Australia and America. Now living at the Fernhill Gurukula in Ooty, India, Guru Nitya is working on a three volume commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*.

The present commentary on the first section, *Ānandalaharī*, of Śankara's *Saundaryalaharī* grew out of a class of intimate meditations given in Portland, Oregon. The academic disciplines of aesthetics, linguistics and psychology are integrated with contemplation into a comprehensive study of creative manifestation.

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